

CLOSE UP

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AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

When we go to a cinema in England to-day, as often as not it is a bewildering transmigration to some great outdoors. I mean, of course, the atmospheric cinema.

Here are roofs that are skies, walls that are pergolas, cloisters, palazzi, Tuscan hillsapes, Old Madrid, Autumn in Cyprus, Spring in Corfu—a travelogue of worth and wonder, but relevant to lord knows not what, but not to cinema, indeed, as though—we are beginning to be aware—anything ever could be! No, sir! Not cinema, pure or impure, though sometimes we must pause to muse on this vague chimera and if we think we mean anything when we chatter about it, why should not a Corsican Spring-spa or something les Bains not be quite perfect cinema, when you think that in the middle of it all, beneath the changing plaster sky, in classic amphitheatre enclosure reminiscent of anything from the Theatre of Dionysus to the Hollywood Bowl, sits, chews, coughs, sleeps, fondles, and sees and hears a gathering of true believers? A solemn thought.

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But in these fresh fields and pastures new no old dun cow may moo or miew, no Amaryllis do those sprightly things that Amarylli do do, no distant view of men who go down to the sea in chars-a-banc may raise the dust, no pleasant bird may chirp, duck waddle, fowl lay eggs, or bull give chase, no rain from out those rubicund suspicious skies dismiss us scampering to Tudor hot-dog counters. No, sir. No, sir. For we are there—you would never think it—to look in one direction—that small white space behind those huge magenta drapes. That space which alone remains undecorated. Why?

Is there any reason, quite seriously, why the screen itself should not have a little care and ingenuity expended on it; a pattern of something or other—foliage, a palm leaf, the chubby edge of an oleander, or thin and dusky silhouettes of tree trunks?

After all why not? Why on earth not? In the only perfect atmospheric theatre I have visited I could see perhaps one third of the screen if that. But what a third! And what it did to mere film, making it a—forgive me if I say “that other world,” that hocus-pocussy saturnalia in tango time, and then flame, white and silent as the sun, something fraught, if that is what I mean, with life caught unawares and from the outside in, or the other side up, and terribly, grandly vital and to be watched. Well, isn't that, no matter what you may say, isn't that the aim of the cinema we champion?

A word on the decor, of which the audience is so oddly a kind of keynote. This audience was something I could spy at, sniperishly. They sat and they behaved, I must say

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decorously and a little melodiously perhaps in the middle of their staggering decor. Palm trees flanked the screen. Not "palms" but trees thirty, forty, fifty feet high. Have I not already mentioned palm trees? And that oleander too that stroked the back of my neck. Spraying outwards in usual form, trees made a cup for the screen—pepper, rubber and eucalyptis, not one of them a common or garden tree in this so over-done scheme whose name must surely be An Old Casino Garden; and that Casino itself none other than the world's most famous—Monte Carlo, fabulous rococo triumph, completely a Hollywood conception of itself, if that means anything.

Overhead a sky of stars and prosperity moon, and a dim circle somewhere back of the trees of lighted trams and cars. A moving circle too! Imagine that! And imagine trying to focus attention on the film with all these rumbling, booming, tinkling, tooting horrors keeping up the *esprit* of the "scheme"—even to the extent of distant jazz, undoubtedly meant to come from some adjoining terrace of these stately grounds. As I say, imagine the impossibility of focussing attention and your imaginings are leading you astray.

Let me take you into my confidence and explain why I, a more or less hard-boiled movie-goer, should have so palpitated over a meek one-third of a screen. Then let me confess that mine was a cheating participation. I had no ticket. I had not paid. I had walked into and then stood in company with a sprinkling of well-behaved, similarly fraudulent fans, peeping through a chink between railings and tree-trunks. We were such law-abiding malefactors, such an orderly, charming audience. Particularly was my heart won

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by an elderly dame in white squatting on her hams, and both hands simianly grabbing a railing. Silent, intent and enchanted! Our view was oblique and trees flared up and across the screen, so that the dazzling play of light behind them was imbued with odd intensity. There were the other lights. They were yellow-green and red too. But this. The amazing whiteness! One realised at once the abstract loveliness of cutting. Appreciations and perceptions that not any ten franc seat inside could possibly have given. Here was straight access to the Kingdom of the movie, and the enchanted glade this (enchanted certainly) quietly waving triumph of rare trees. Beyond, that avid, significant flame, soundless and swept with vigor. There was that in it which made us realize that not since childhood had we been stirred in just this way—that we had not received just this—and what, good gracious, was it? Cinema *pur*? Cinema among the trees, among the trams, under the moon—"real life"? Perhaps. Real life, should we say, with the something added instead of the something taken away. What an age since just that wonder, shock and joy came wholly, making one thing. What a *simple pleasure*! What one had forgotten and foregone in gaining—atmospheric cinemas! Yet here with its audience inside and its audience outside, and the life of that absurd old *fin-de-siecle* town going on all round, what were we doing but adding a little staring to our lives? As we might stare at that famous Dolly brace sweeping in to break the unbreakable Bank. Cinema was that—the staring I mean—with the, I wont say implications and I wont say obligations, and I wont say inhibitions—but something of the kind that makes us polite when we feel rude, and covert

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when we most need to gape—left right out, so that we were free to stare and wonder in beautiful innocence.

Not that this, far from it, pretends to plead for outdoor kinos. We have no summer nights like Monte Carlo's. Nor is it meant to point any moral except this—if we are to go atmospheric, aren't we losing a terrible lot by not being atmospheric of something? Even if not of cinema! This casual summer-garden was perfect—and, of course, quite limited. Because it linked the screen to, let us repeat, trams and railings and pavements and everthing. It made the finest sound film we shall have in years. And I would say this also: only myself and my fellow miscreants were the privileged. A night or two later I sat inside, and the glamour was gone. I mean the sense of balance. The kitschy film was dominant.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

FILMS AND THE LAW I SING

A note on the law governing the showing of films in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

A film society cannot go far without running up against the law, and in this case it is better to meet trouble half way than deplete the society's funds by making a handsome con-

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tribution to the maintenance of the local police force. Hence the following notes may be of interest to those who have formed or who contemplate forming a film society.

First, as we all know, there are two kinds of film, the non-inflammable film used largely by amateurs in 9.5 mm. and 16 mm. machines, and the inflammable or ordinary commercial film. Thus the first questions a film society not having the use of a licenced hall is likely to ask are, (a) Can we show non-inflammable films? and (b) can we show inflammable films?

(a) *As to the showing of non-inflammable films.* The answer, as our Parliamentary friends would say, is in the affirmative. (They mean, yes, and so do I.) You may show non-inflammable films; but note that apparently films may be inflammable although they can be used in the cinematograph without taking fire. (*Victoria Pier (Folkestone) Syndicate Ltd. v. Reeve.* (1912) 76 J.P. 374). So far, so good, you say, but can the authorities in their all-seeing wisdom and solicitude for our well-being say our films are not suitable for exhibition and prevent us from showing them? The answer is not certain but it will probably depend on whether the showing of the film to the society could be said to be an exhibition to the public or not. But what is the public? Well, in the interesting case of *Duck v. Bates*, (1884) 13 Q.B.D. 487, it was held that the performance of a play to the nurses and students of Guy's Hospital and their friends was not a public performance. Presumably then, members of a limited class cannot be said to be the public. But if anyone can join your society simply by applying for membership and paying a subscription—be it one shilling or

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twenty-five—can it be said that you are members of a limited class? It is very doubtful. But how to get over the difficulty? Well, form yourselves into a private society, that is into one in which the prospective members must be proposed and seconded before they are elected. You will then probably be members of a limited class, and able to show any non-inflammable film with impunity. (Incidentally, this may explain the L.C.C.'s differentiation between the Film Society and the Workers' Film Society.)

(b) *As to the showing of inflammable films.* The answer to question (b) is by no means so simple. The law on the point is stringent, section 1 of the Cinematograph Act 1909 running as follows:

“An exhibition of pictures or other optical effects by means of a cinematograph or other similar apparatus for the purposes of which inflammable films are used shall not be given unless the regulations made by the Secretary of State for securing safety are complied with, or save as otherwise expressly provided by this Act, elsewhere than in premises licenced for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of this Act.”

The point to note is that the Act prohibits every “exhibition” and not merely a public exhibition. Prima facie that shatters all hope, but the effect depends on the interpretation to be placed on the word “exhibition.” Apparently the only judicial decision on the point was in the Attorney-General v. Vitagraph Company Ltd. (1915) 1 Ch. 206, where Astbury J. said, “Having regard to the fact if I am right that there must be some limitation put upon the word “Exhi-

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bition," and that it cannot possibly be held to include every occasion on which a film is run through a cinematograph machine, I think I ought to construe the Act as relating to places of public entertainment where an exhibition of a cinematograph picture takes place . . .". In that case it was held that the word "exhibition" did not include the case of a dealer bona fide and in his trade of selling and renting out films running them through the machine, although he did so in the presence of one or more customers. That decision is clearly favourable to the view that to show films to a private society is not to "exhibit" them; but in another case which came before a London police court (whose value as an authority would not equal that of the Chancery Division of the High Court) it was held that cinematograph exhibition given at a hospital in connection with lectures at a medical congress infringed the Act, but the point that it was not an exhibition within the meaning of the Act does not appear to have been raised as the defence was conducted by a layman. (Re National Hospital for the Paralysed and Epileptic, (1913) *Times*, October 11.) That appears to be the law as it now stands, and perhaps shortly we may find a society public-spirited enough to get themselves prosecuted to settle the point. But for a Society that wants to go warily, it is better not to exhibit inflammable films (the maximum penalty for doing so is £20) except as mentioned later.

Section 7 (2) of the same Act which creates an important exception reads as follows :

"Where the premises in which it is proposed to give such an exhibition as aforesaid are premises used occasion-

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ally and exceptionally only, and not on more than six days in any one calendar year, for the purpose of such exhibition it shall not be necessary to obtain a licence for those premises under this Act if the occupier thereof has given to the County Council and the chief officer of the police area, not less than seven days before the exhibition notice in writing of his intention to use the premises, and complied with the regulations made by the Secretary of State under this Act, and subject to such regulations with any conditions imposed by the County Council and notified to the occupier in writing."

The effect of this is that a society may hold an exhibition after giving due notice to the County Council and the chief officer of the police area on not more than six days in any one year subject to complying with the regulations made by the Secretary of State and the conditions (if any) imposed by the County Council. Most societies, however, might find it difficult to comply with the regulations of the Secretary of State—particularly with regard to the operating chamber—and the conditions imposed by the County Council might be prohibitive, but the provision is worth remembering if you can ever get a suitable building.

Another very important exception is created by section 7 (4) of the Act which reads thus :

" This Act shall not apply to an exhibition given in a public dwellinghouse to which the public are not admitted whether on payment or otherwise."

This presents a further loophole for the ingenious. It might not be wise to hire a room in a private dwellinghouse,

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though it might come within the section, and that same public-spirited society may care to try it, but if a member of your society were to be so kind as to invite his friends, the other members of the society to come to his house to see some films, then probably all would be well, although the society might itself have hired the films and paid all expenses. That too is worth remembering.

But where is that public-spirited society?

I. M. BANNER MENDUS.

THE KINO OLYMPIAD: MOSCOW

Left London in midst of continued battle with the Censor and others over showing of Russian films, and arrived in Moscow just in time to see a collected programme of thirty Soviet films! Being a student of the State Institute of Cinematography, Moscow, entails certain privileges, among which is entrance to all cinemas at reduced rates. Average cost of show is 50 kopecks to a rouble, as student get in for 25 kopecks. The Olympiad, however, was a special festival to which I had a season ticket for everything. Its purpose was to show to the people of Moscow (and incidentally to the delegates of the Communist Congress taking place at same time) all the cinema and theatre and art activities of the rest of the Soviet Union. For the first time fourteen of the largest

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national groups in the Union were represented at the festival. Nearly all of them have their own theatre organizations, twelve have film producing units, so far. All these are now unified under the Soviet United Kino (COUZKINO). These are Russian proper :

Coúzkino (Moscow and Leningrad—Soukino) and *Meschra-boom*.

Ukraine : VUFKU.

White Russia : BELGOSKINO.

Eastern S.S.R. (Asia) : VOSTOKINO and KINO-SIBIER.

Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan : UZBEKINO and TURKMENKINO.

Georgia : GRÝZGOSKINPROM.

Armenia and Aizerbaijan : AZGOSKINO and ARMENKINO and CHOUVASHKINO.

Of the thirty films shown by these at the Olympiad, I managed to see twenty three in one month ! And in the eight weeks I have been here (it seems ages) have seen in all forty five films, including English, American, Japanese, German, sound and silent. One of these was *Intolerance* by D. W. Griffiths, and another the curiously named film by Jukichi Suzuki *What Makes Her Thus* or more fully *What has caused her to be in such a position* ? These must be dealt with separately, now I will concentrate on Soviet films.

Leaving out the seven already dealt with in *Close Up* (i.e., *Mother*, *Ghenghis Khan*, *C.B.D.*, *New Babylon*, *Turksib*, *Man Movie Camera*, *Mechanics of Brain*) we have left twenty five, which I will classify thus :

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DRAMAS : 1. Old (Russian) Style. 2. New (Russian) Style.

DRAMA-DOCUMENTAL :

CHRONICLES :

EDUCATIONAL :

DRAMAS 1.

Revenge. AZARMENKINO.

Regisseur Amo Bek-Nazarov.

An early film of this section. Melodramatic story of unrequited love, where all die in the end like a Shakespearan tragedy. A national legendry tale in modern setting having all the similarities with other such dramas of classic lore. There were too many titles, showing its obvious adaptation from a book. The one thing of note is the producer's handling of a volcanic eruption at beginning of film, which for a new kino company was very well done and could easily compare with U.S.A. in realism! This producer's later film *House on Volcano* has a similar catastrophe of a great fire, which was remarkably realistic. So that such happenings appear to be Bek-Nazarov's *forte*. His later film however has definite tendency and deals with a part of the class-struggle, and is much better.

Comet. VOSTOKINO.

Reg. and Scenarist : V. I. Inkishinov

Operator : V. Franzison.

A rather stupid story of the fear of a comet crashing into



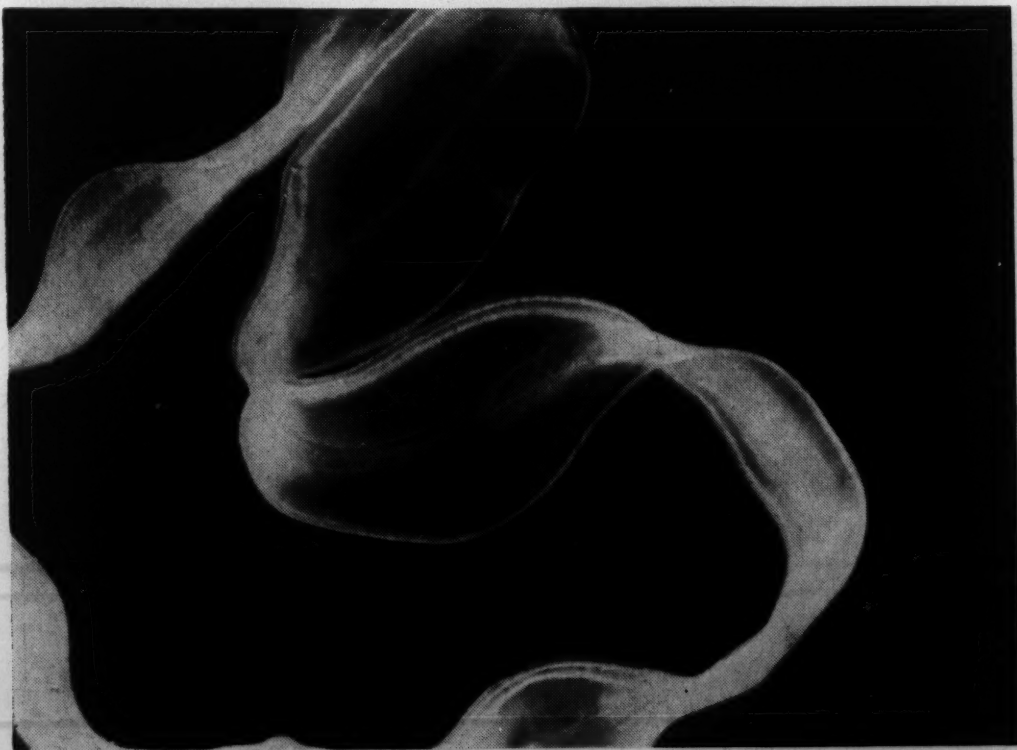
A page of Little Ones—alike in gaze and temperament! Above, *Buschi*, a seven months' old orangoutang in an Ufa Kulturfilm of the same name, and below the diminutive Esquimo *gourmets* have not a care in the world when their breakfast of fish-oil is set before them.
From *Greenland Glimpses*.



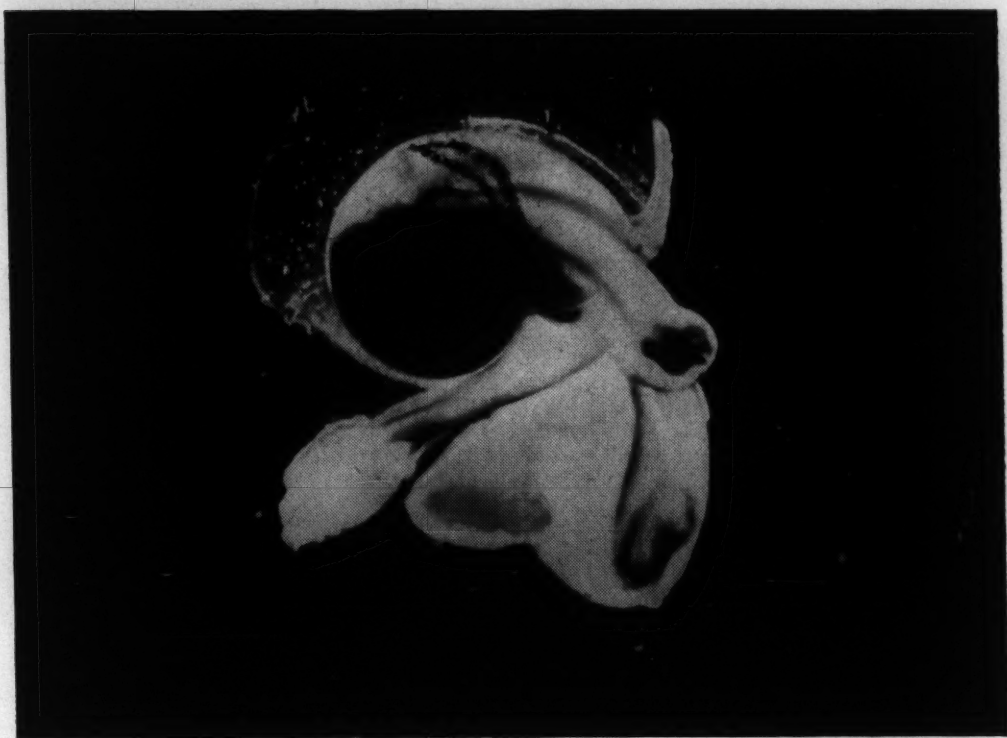
Photos: Ufa



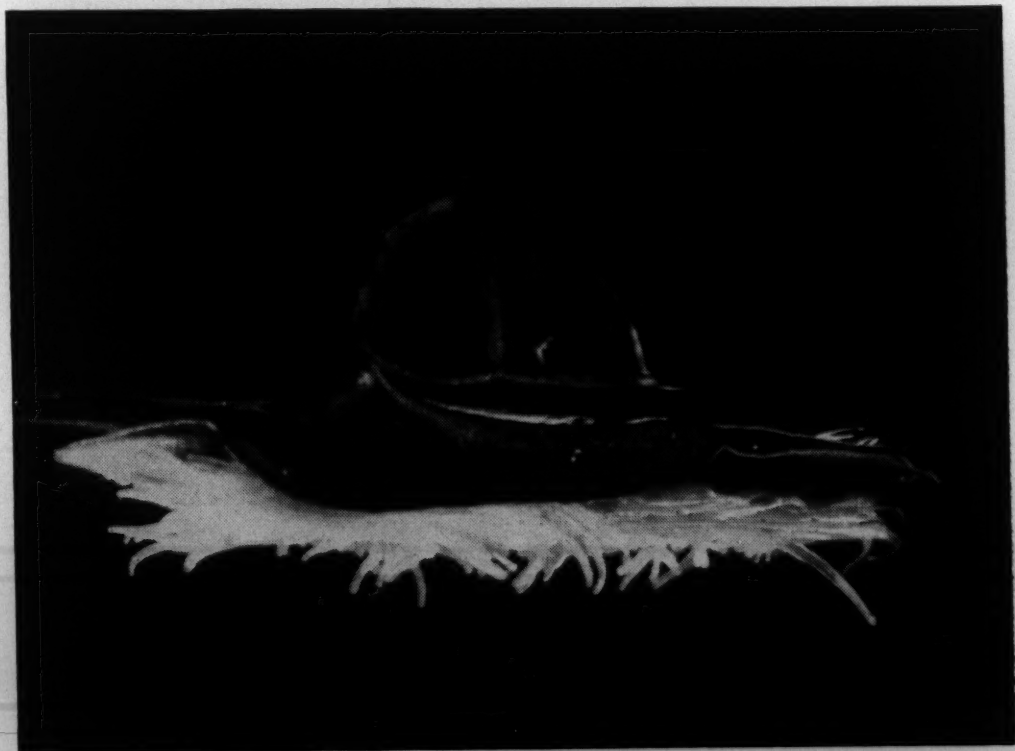
From the popular Ufa *Creatures of Crystal*, a fascinating documentaire of the transparent creatures of the sea. Above, Salpa, belonging to the family of tunicates, and below, the Venus girdle, a ribbon-shaped, vertebrate jelly-fish.



Photos: Ufa



Further *Creatures of Crystal*. Above, the sailing jelly-fish Velella,
and below, the sea snail Atlanta.





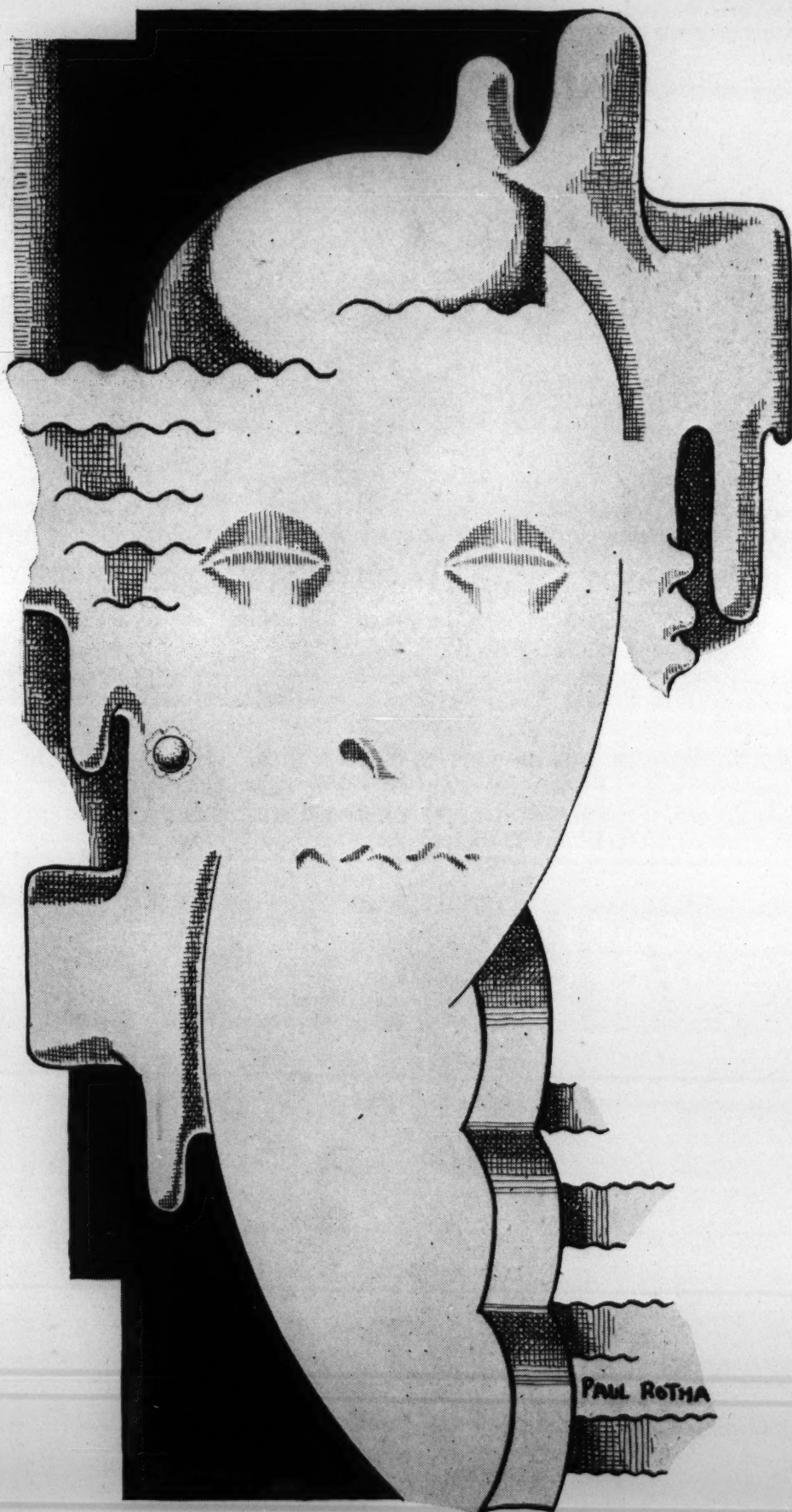
From a new film by Henri Storck, *Life Savers of the Belgian Coast*,
a document of 700 metres.



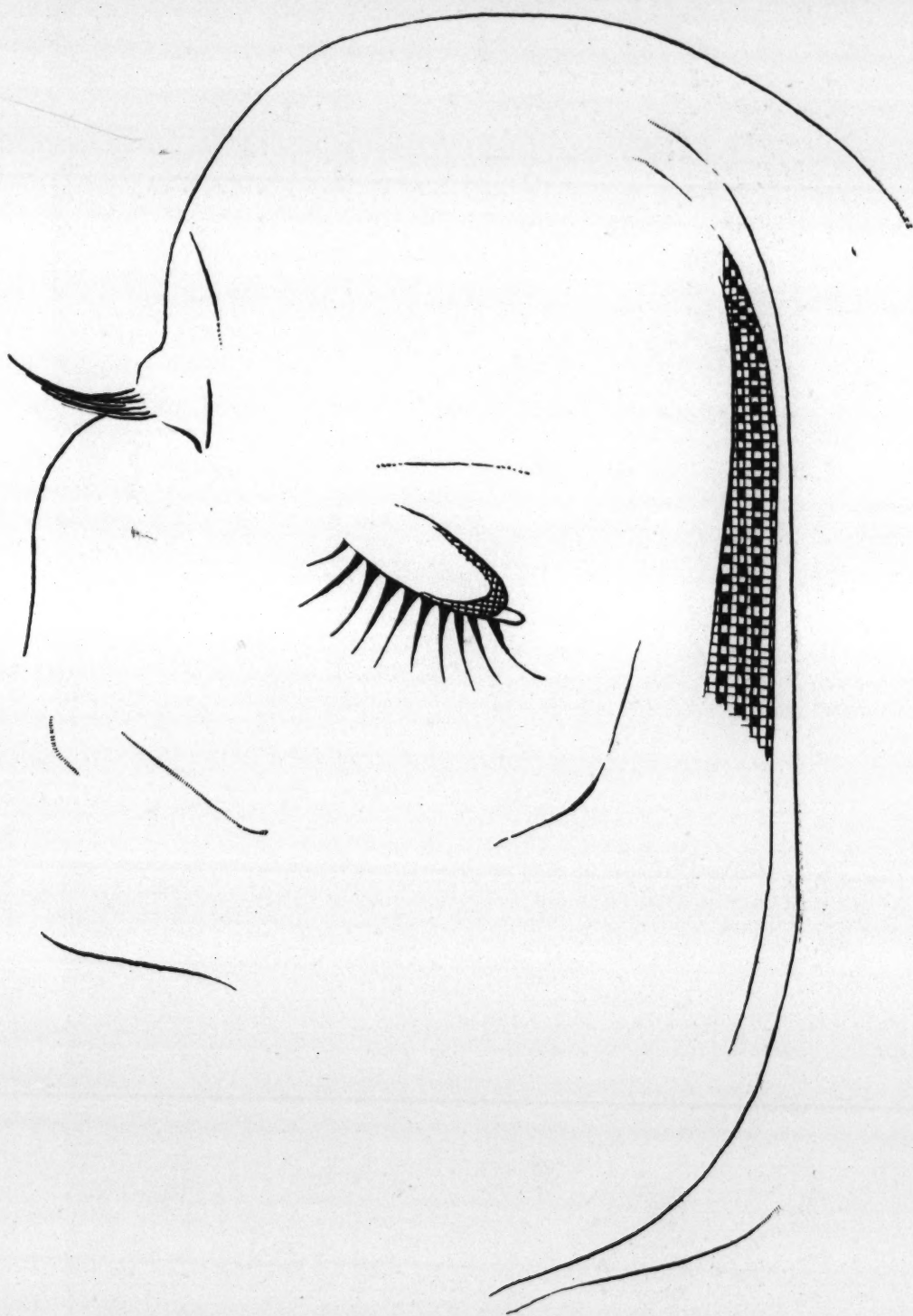


M. G. M. Barkies. A new series of comedies. Jiggs, above, as the detective Phido Vance in *The Dogville Murder Mystery* or *Who killed Rover*. Below, rehearsal of the Front Line chorus in the Bark and Dance show, *Dogway Melody*.





Paul Rotha's rendering of Greta Garbo. This blew up a storm of argument, the outcome of which was . . .



... as above, a design submitted by one of the junior members of the staff
—the Editor. Both are printed without comment, but readers will no doubt
prefer their own.



Photos: Richee

Marlene Dietrich, the German star who has gone to Hollywood to make talking films for Paramount.

These portraits are printed by courtesy of Paramount.

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the earth, and the advantages taken of this by certain individuals, and one woman in particular who freed herself of her husband. Interesting in that the types were Tartars and Mohammedans, and the scenes were Eastern. The producer was the Mongol in Pudowkin's film *Heir of Ghengis Khan*, it does not appear from this film that he has any talent in producing.

DRAMAS 2. New (Russian) Style.

Zimla (Earth). VUFKU.

Reg. and Scenario : A. Dovszhenko.

Rich waving corn, cloud shadows moving in the wind, great open skies, growth of fruit, sunflowers and a sunflower maiden, luscious apples on heavy laden trees, ripe for the fall. On the thick grass in the orchard an old man is lying, white and beautiful with age. He is smiling at three people standing around him, waiting, their dark hair contrasting with his whiteness. "Son—I am dying," peacefully the watch, the very young man with clean shaven face, the father with dark beard and wife buxom on the grass, two young children play. "Yes . . . but you must die," the reply is as natural as the ripe apples and the corn and the children as they watch the old man's smile. "For 75 years have I ploughed the earth." "Father, if I were a Commisar I would give you an Order for that," but the grandson interjects. "They don't give Orders for that." "For what do they give them then? . . ." but the old man holds out his hand. "I should like something to eat. Give me an apple," and as he slowly eats the ripe fruit another old man, unobstrusive in the background,

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comes forward. "Brother, promise to tell me where you have gone if you can, so I may come too. . ." The dying man smiles and nods, and falls slowly back. Dead. The children are nibbling at ripe apples, the sunflowers and the fruit are growing.

Crying faces of women, angry Kulaks, resisting collectivisation. One tries to kill his horse, but is stopped by his son. There is a great meeting in the village, all crowding under great white sky. In the lone cemetery old man kneels by grave of his friend. "Brother, are you there?" and he listens, ear to earth. "Good health, grandfather" comes the reply . . . from three children hiding behind another grave. The crowd increases, ploughman stops horse to watch, three cows watch, three kulaks, all chewing. All watch road that leads over skyline. On which appears figures marching, and in the middle, IT! Crowd rushes. The TRACTOR has come! It stops. Kulaks deride "STOPS!" others "IT GOES!" Men try to push it. Then driver finds radiator empty. No water anywhere. "Did you drink well at the last village?" he asks of his company. And they fill the radiator. "IT GOES!" At Collective centre: report that tractor has stopped. The Tractor MUST NOT STOP, is reply. "IT GOES!" Triumphant enters village. "FACT" admits one kulak. Driver addresses crowd as to what it can do. Kulaks jeer. "WATCH" . . . "WE BEGIN." Then the machine is plowing, raking, sowing, reaping, threshing, sorting, breadmaking, machines over beasts. The leader of village Communists, the dead man's grandson, is triumphant. His work bears fruit. Then when work is done, twilight comes, lovers walk, older ones to

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bed, mists creep, darkness falls. Grandson and his love at last have to part. And along the lane he comes home, strong with love and completed work. His joy bubbles over, he begins to stamp the dust, he dances, DANCES, dancing man and dancing dust. Then suddenly he collapses limp to the ground, still. A horse starts with fear in the dark, and in the distance a white figure is running, running away. Only the dust dances. Night.

The father is sitting with bowed head, by his dead son. Knock comes to door, all look up. News of murderer? But it is only a priest. "It's no good now," the father says, "and you too are no good now." The priest goes back to his empty church. "Bury him in the New Way" father says to head of village Soviet. "Without priests or acolytes," and so only a singing crowd escort him to his grave. But the older women fearfully cross themselves muttering "God save us, without priests or crosses!" But the people go singing on. Pass ripening sunflower fields. A pregnant woman labours in travail. Priest totters round his empty church and barren ikons. Youth sings. The open coffin almost seems to float along. The dead face is brushed by apple-laden branches. "Strike them God!" priest cries to ikons. And a white figure of kulak is seen running across the fields. The baby is being born. Sunflowers growing. The body of the dead moves on. Life is singing. Priest muttering. Kulak running amok, twisting his head round and round in the earth. "Strike!" says priest. "This is *my* earth," cries the white kulak. "MINE." But the fruit grows, babies are born, sunflowers grow, men and women sing, the dead go on. The Kulak hears them coming nearer. He rushes to cemetery,

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between the crosses, towards them, crying "I killed him." The procession moves on, they do not hear him. "I killed him at night," he shouts. Still they sing. "At night when he danced like this!" and he too dances among the graves. There the dying living and the living dead. But no one hears him. They are listening to a speaker on the new life. "He died on the dawn of a new life." "He died for the dawn."

Then comes the rain and lovely fruit and trees are made yet more beautiful by the silver rain brushed with the wind. Corn, apples, melons, fruit, shine, as the rain ceases, triumphant nature.

Function.—In contrast to the majority of Soviet films and to Dovzhenko's last film *Arsenal* this is a meditative film. A philosophical meditation on the immutability of nature. Nature grows, man dies, is born, struggles, dies, part of that greater Nature. Death is even more beautiful than life when it is of the rightly lived. Theoretically this film is not of strict Communist ideology, it is rather the resignation and acceptance by man of immortal immutable Nature. Fear no death. "Yes, but you must die" is said quite calmly. Deep-meaning too is the old man's request, not for an "Order" but "something to eat."

The original film had two other threads which were cut out by the Censor. But are of great interest in that they emphasise more strongly the philosophy of the film. One part is that of the Lover of the dead man who when she heard of it in her room, tears off her cloths and goes "berserk" with sorrow, deep animal sorrow, the cry for a lost mate. And the other is the end, where this girl is in the arms of another man; nature consoles herself always with the living. (Reminiscent

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of part of Sean O'Casey's play *The Silver Tassie*.) It is not really tragic, it is just life, nature immortal. Another part too that will probably be cut out is the filling of the radiator by the men. Interesting attempt to link up man organically with his machines. They grow from each other, part of a Whole.

Form.—Due to its meditative quality it tended to still-ness of action, that at times seem suspiciously photographic and not cinematic. The "suspended action" of *Arsenal* was here almost "non-action." The fact that Dovzshenko was once a painter may help to explain this tendency. The shots of the fruit are the most beautiful I have seen. Several continuing compositions were interesting: a ploughman between two cows, and the driver between two great tractor wings, but the contrasts of cows and people has been done before! But to me undoubtedly the loveliest moment in the film is when the apple-laden branches brush the face of the dead man in his coffin. Here death really *was* beautiful. Throughout the compositions of narrow earth and wide expanse of skies gave the impression of nature over all. But, and here is an important point, Nature in its best clothes. Bedecked with jewelry. Nature in one mood.

An original and beautiful film. The man that can make two such divergent films as *Arsenal* and *Earth* is a master to be studied. The subject of his next will be DNIEPRESTROY, which will be when completed the largest electric power station in the world, with *Turk-Sib* the pride of the Five-Year plan thus far achieved. With such variety of subjects can one wonder at the versatility of the Soviet cinema?

Arsenal has been dealt with in *Close Up* as also has a *Stump of an Empire* so that it will be unnecessary for me to touch on

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them. Except to note that the version of Mr. Blakeston in the January, 1930, number contained two errors. Without titles it was very difficult to understand the film and its meaning in the subtler points in which the film abounded.

NOTES ON O. B.'S REPORT.—He did not realise that the woman in the train was Filiminof's *Wife*, that puts all the rest into perspective, why his memory came back, the links that gradually fit in, the sewing machine that becomes a machine gun, the bell and cigarette box links, war memories. The woman who questions him is *not* his wife, but a woman who took him in after war to help as a sort of "general," he doesn't leave her to *lose* his old memories, but to search for his wife now his memory has come back. And the letter he takes in the end is a ruse of a friend who finds out it is his wife, who has married again! He does not "see himself as officer with the dog, etc," but sees the new husband as such, in other words stumps of an Empire, to which his wife still clings. So he goes to the new, alone.

H. P. J. MARSHALL.

(*To be continued.*)

NEWS OF THE SOVIET CINEMA

At a conference of the All-Union Electrotechnical Alliance a resolution was accepted providing for the construction of a special plant to manufacture electrotechnical fittings for sound apparatus. Apparatus will be produced on two systems, Shorin and Tager.

A large motion picture exhibition was set up in St. George's Hall of the Kremlin Palace on the occasion of the 16th Party Congress. The material of the exhibition embraced the following questions: how the Five Year Plan of the film industry is arranged, how the soviet cinema is reaching the masses, how our films are received abroad, how the bourgeoisie uses the motion to its own ends, etc. In striking statistics, in easily-comprehensible drawings, models and photographs, the exhibition sets forth answers to these questions. The educational film department of the Sovkino issued films, especially to coincide with the Congress, on the following subjects: the purging of the soviet apparatus, the struggle for the fulfilment of the industrial-financial plan, the bolshevist sowing campaign, the purging and growth of the party, and the situation of the labourer in various countries.

BRINGING THE MOTION PICTURE INTO THE MUSEUM

In order to bring the cinema into the museums of Leningrad and its suburbs, a display of montage rolls of motion

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pictures under the general title of *War as represented by the masters of the cinema* was set up at the "War and Art" exhibition in the Russian Museum. At Peterhof in the Lower Palace—the summer residence of the Romanovs—a series of extracts from old news-reels depicting the life of Nicholas II and his family are being shown.

At the exhibition "The Imperialist War and the Revolution," which is taking place in the Peterhof Park, not far from the Farm Cottage and which is laid out in those historical railroad cars in one of which Nicholas Romanov signed his abdication from the throne, a motion picture theatre seating two hundred has been constructed. Here news-reels of the war, dating from 1914-17, will be shown.

A general autonomous bureau for photographic and motion picture import and export, "Intorgkino," was formed in April of this year, and functions as a state monopoly. All motion picture organisations within the boundaries of the U.S.S.R. (the Mezhrabpomfilm, the cinema organisations of the allied republics, etc.) carry on the import and export of materials, equipment and so on, only through the Intorgkino. The Peoples' Commissariat for Trade has given the Intorgkino the right to regulate photo and cinema import and export and the power of granting license.

THE SOVIET HOLLYWOOD.

The construction of this gigantic cinema plant was begun in the autumn of 1928. 12,500,000 rubles have been assigned for its construction. The plant is scheduled to be completed toward the end of the Five Year Period, in 1933. The most important structures are being given first consideration, and

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work on them is being carried on at forced speed. Thus, for instance, the main building—the studio—with all its subordinate departments (cameramen's rooms, directorial and scenario offices, photographic laboratory, scenery-painting shop, etc.) will be completed toward the end of the current season—in the autumn of 1930.

The studio is already partially finished, is being equipped and will be ready for use at the end of August 1930. The entire plant, moreover, will be equipped during the winter of 1930-31 and will be ready for use as a whole by the spring of 1931, that is to say months earlier than the date called for in the plan.

Such is the case with the second largest construction programme, that for two laboratories for productive and mass work respectively. It had been planned to lay their foundations next season, that is in the spring of 1931, the buildings were to have been completed by 1932, and the equipment was to have been ready by the autumn of 1932. In fact, however, the construction of the laboratories has been begun, is going on, and will be finished by autumn 1930. In the winter of 1930-31 the laboratories will be fitted out and with the spring of 1931 they will begin to function. According to plan the instalment of electrical equipment was to have been begun in 1929 and finished in 1930; actually it was begun in 1930 and will be finished in 1930. The warehouse for the storing of negatives, a building of extremely complicated construction, will be finished this year, instead of in 1931.

On the whole 50 per cent. of the construction programme has already been carried out in two working seasons, without increasing the number of workmen or the financial estimates.

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The giant factory will be a cinema-town at the end of the Five Year Plan, with a population of thousands of workers. Fifty five acres of land lying across the river Setun, opposite the factory, have already been set aside as a site for workers' homes. The construction of dwelling houses has already been begun, but its development at full speed will begin next year. Construction is continually being extended—the Five Year Plan has been made to include, over and above the original programme, the building of a town of pavilions for the production of sound films on the territory of the cinema factory, a special building for the offices of the Moscow department of the Sovkino, a special building for the University of the Cinema, a dormitory for students, etc. All the buildings of the factory are planned with greatest consideration for the comfort of the workers, in order that their labour may be as efficient as possible. According to the reports of many specialists, both Soviet and foreign, the new Cinema Factory will be one of the best in the world as regards the technique of its equipment.

In the laboratory of Engineer Shorin sound records are being made of the first sound programme of the White Russian State Cinema, composed of White Russian, Polish and Jewish songs; and also of music performed on popular instruments by virtuosi specially brought over from White Russia for this purpose. The second part of this programme is made up of speeches by White Russian political and social workers on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of White Russia's freedom from the White Poles. These speeches were recorded during the sessions of the 16th party congress.

The VUFKU (All-Ukrainian Photo-Cinema Administra-

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tion) has finished photographing the film *Features of Contemporary Surgery*, for which the following operations have been filmed: trepanation of the skull, cancer operation, resection of the stomach, transfusion of blood, and X-Ray treatment. The filming took place under the supervision of Professor Silberberg and Doctor Lyubarski.

In Moscow a conference was held dealing with the reorganisation of Soviet film advertising technique. Addresses were heard on the following subjects: "Perspective of the Moving Picture Advertisement" and "What sort of Motion Advertising Should Soviet Russia Have?" In the resolution adopted after these addresses the fact was emphasised that the Soviet film advertisement was to be basically an educational work connected with the cinema. The conference adopted a number of measures for the reform of motion picture advertising.

The instalment of apparatus in the newly fitted out sound studio of the Leningrad Cinema Studio has been completed.

Work has been commenced on the mounting of the sound film *Alone*. Directors, G. Kozintsov and L. Trauberg, cameraman, Moskvina; artist, Yenei; composer, D. Shostakovich (author of the opera *The Nose*, after Gogol's tale). All outdoor shots taken in Kiratia (Altai).

At the plant of the Mezhrabpom (International Workers') film work has been begun on the photography of the art-film *The Song*, directed by Gendelstein. In the picture is brought up the question of art as a hindrance to the toilers in their struggle, and of art aiding proletariat—of the indispensibility of bringing "pure art" imprisoned by ancient traditions,

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near to the modern observer, to the massed millions of toilers, the builders of socialism. The film will be part talking, part sound.

The mounting of the film *Igdenbu* has been finished. The director is Bek-Nazarov, the cameraman Bloom. The film was made in the far east and depicts the life of the tribe of the Golds.

At the Leningrad studio the film *The Sleeping Beauty*, after the scenario of G. Alexandrov, has been finished. The *mise en scene* is by directors S. and G. Vasiliev. The subject is the rôle of art in the period of reconstruction.

Director Esfir Shub has finished the mounting of the film *Today*. Into the film have entered fragments of material shot in the most important commercial centres of the U.S.S.R. and news reel material taken during the last few years in Western Europe, America and the colonies.

Director O. Preobrazhenskaya, creator of the film *The Women of Ryazan*, has finished work on the film *The Silent Don*, after the well-known novel of M. Sholokhov. In the main rôles are the players Zessarskaya Podgorny and others.

On the invitation of the cinema section of VOKS Mr. Ippei Fukuro, the editor of the Japanese motion picture magazine *Cinema-Dziumpo*, visited the U.S.S.R. In connection with his arrival *Voks* arranged a series of lectures and previews of Japanese films of recent release (the film *How Did She Get That Way?* by the director Sudzuki and the Japanese animated cartoon "Chio Janii" (that is, pictures not drawn, but snipped out of coloured paper); the work of the artist Ofudzi. Addresses were read by Professor Kim and Konrad. Mr. Fukuro is the author of the Japanese translations of the

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scenario of the film *The Ghost That Never Returns* and of Eisenstein's conclusion to the book *The Japanese Cinema*. This translation and also the lectures given by Fukuro in the University of Tokio, have evoked great interest among Japanese cinema men, and particularly among a group of students who are studying the art of the cinema, and who sent with Mr. Fukuro a special letter to director Eisenstein. In the letter this group of students at the University of Keio asks Eisenstein to send them all the articles he has ever written on the theory of the motion picture, since they wish to publish them in a separate book as a reference work for students. They likewise assert that Eisenstein's conclusion to the book *The Japanese Cinema* inspired them to begin the study analysis of the technique of Japanese Feudal Art.

E. Lemberg's book *The Cinema Industry of the U.S.S.R.* (The Economics of Soviet Cinematography) has just been published by the Tea-Kino Pechat (Theatre and Motion Picture Publishing House) with a foreword by Y. Larin. The book is a detailed analysis of the U.S.S.R.'s cinema market, with an account of all its peculiarities, and throws light on the question of cinema import and export. A special section is devoted to the cinema productions of the republics of the national minorities. The price of the book is 5 rubles.

Director Vinitsky and cameraman Rona (Wufku) are working on the scientific film *Man and Monkey*. The film deals with the theory of evolution of species from the Marxist point of view. The Communist Academy and the Moscow Institute of Darwinism are being consulted in connection with the film. The shots are being made in the ape menagerie at Sukhum. P. A.

ATTITUDE AND INTERLUDE

OR, CONTEMPORARY CINEMA ARCHITECTURE IN THE LIGHT
OF BUNYAN'S *Pilgrim's Progress*.

We have lately, said he, adopting his best impersonal style, been interesting ourselves in the evolution of an attitude. There is nothing unusual in this. We are always interested in the evolution of something or other. Until it has evolved.

That is the drawback of an attitude. The moment it becomes a philosophy it ceases to matter, as we may take it no sensible person is interested in anything except making money these days.

A chastening thought, explaining as it does the terrible struggle between Art and Commerce now raging at Elstree.

Besides, an attitude, as St. Paul the Apostle remarked so wittily, is just another excuse for theology. There is really no excuse for attitudinising in self-defence these days; a cold compress on the nape of the neck will prove more efficacious. And so much less worrying mentally. Or again, as Queen Lizzy remarked to the Adjectival Mary, what's in an attitude?

Have you ever, said he, adopting the direct attack style so much favoured by newspaper magnates, felt the total in-

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adequacy of words as a means of expression? Have you ever realised how we live in a word-bound world of literary limbo? You have? Right, Sir, yours is an attitude.

Incidentally, if such is the unhappy case, and your suppressed desires gasp for fresh mediums of expression, we may make any or all of three deductions.

Either you are such a thick-headed, illiterate, ill-kempt idiot that you do not understand your own language, or you are a genuine artist, in which case may the Lord have mercy on your soul and overdraft, or you are just another of those muddle-headed half-wits who think round the unfamiliar sides of a rectangle, like a taxi-driver airing his knowledge of London by taking the backstreets and the short cuts with one eye on the meter and the other on the longest way round the short side of a circle. No doubt you have noticed the high percentage of squinting taxi-drivers.

Is that clear, brief, concise, pithy? Get me, Steve?

Cinema is the modern attitude. That means, it is so much less disconcerting than a complete theory. It supplies no answer; it merely gives an excuse. It is the unfinished fragment of the modern development, the work in progress of the experimentalist, the dimpled dumpling of the dubious dabbler in dazzling developments.

Cinema's attitude is the world attitude. Sad, but true.

We have recently been intellectually stimulated by the Three Greatest Talking Pictures on record. (The first World's Greatest for nearly a week). These films are regarded as the answer to the critics' prayer, the ultimate eye-piece of artistic endeavour, the culminating jewel in the fair

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diadem of creative inspiration, and the latest excuse for the British papers to show how worthless is their standard of patriotic criticism.

The three jolly little jack tars in question are *Two Worlds*, *The Yellow Mask*, and *Murder*.

Now let us understand the situation clearly. *Two Worlds* was described in solid print by the *Daily Mail*, that bulwark of the intelligentsia, as the greatest of talking pictures. *The Yellow Mask* was variously described as anything from good entertainment to a terrific box-office smash. *Murder* was laid down by the *Sunday Express*, that house organ of the Exclusive Cult of James Douglas the Deep Thinker, as the latest picture by one of the greatest film geniuses living.

Now it happened that these three films, shown in the order mentioned, improved in that same order. So let us consider 'em that way.

And now, Gentlemen—confound it! The same slip again—what would we, the discerning patrons, the light of intellectual fire, the eternal worshippers of the plastic muse, have to say about them?

That is printable, I mean.

Well, perhaps we would let *Two Worlds* down lightly by saying that as a work of art it was very good popular entertainment. As a contribution to living! Well, ever read a 1916 Bradshaw?

The worst of cinema, it is the attitude of the thoughtless interlude.

We might say of *The Yellow Mask* that it was the mixture as before, only more so. And we might say of *Murder* that it is the best of British films to date.

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In considering *Two Worlds* there is one point one must clear up. I take it we do not mind a film being bad when it never pretends to be anything else. We forgive the Brothers Warner. They do not attempt to make artistic masterpieces. They have their attitude; we have ours. But we do condemn a film which tries to be artistic and misses the mark.

Two Worlds, briefly, might be regarded as being neither of this world nor the next. Spiritualism, another of those Post-War attitudes which is in danger of becoming a philosophy, sometimes postulates seven spiritual planes outside the earth, each one deeper in sympathy than the one beneath. Meet the Eighth Plane. Mr. Dupont.

And now, warming into our stride and adopting the lightly satirical style—styles are so helpful to the scribbler—*Two Worlds* is just the cutest little thing of all time. Its story, probing the psychological profundities of the universe, sweeping the whole panorama of human emotion, delving into the very fundamentals of our being, tells how a handsome Austrian officer during the war falls in love with a Jewess whose father he has illtreated for military purposes. The old man, however, helps him out of a scrape by pretending he is his son, and the girl falls in love with him, and the wicked Russians seek after him in vain, and the boy's father comes back and hears he wants to marry the girl, and says he mustn't, and he says he will, and he threatens to have the father arrested if he does, and he gives in and doesn't, and the girl throws a faint throws a faint throws a faint, and the father does glycerine stuff, and the handsome boy goes off to war leaving the girl he left behind him behind him behind him.

Is that clear? I rather thought not.

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Well, well, well. It is a terrible thing, studying the attitude of others. One's own is sufficient of a nuisance.

All this, mark ye, to the tune of much Jewish religious ritual, an undress scene, and some frightfully-plastic-most-iconoclastic camera angles. Meanwhile the world turns on in the lathe of time and the dark lands heave amain, and we find a joke in the Dupont smoke which will never come back again.

Photography? Picture postcard. Individually good, no sense of unification.

Direction? E. A. Dupont.

Perhaps British International will make money out of *Two Worlds*; one never knows. It seems strange. But then everything seems strange. It is a world of misapplied superlatives and hopelessly valueless values.

The attitude of the commercial cinema; the complete negativity, the lack of interest. Sterility and defeatism.

And so to *The Yellow Mask*. Why a mask, anyway? And why this film? It is curious; Lachman is the naughty boy of the studios, the man who might do a good job if left alone. Instead he does *The Yellow Mask*, which as a contribution to contemporary cinema means as much as a third class sleeper to the seclusion-loving dabbler in the arts.

It is unfair to criticise this film, just as it was unfair to expect anyone to make a good job of it. For the first time I understood why folks made such a fuss of that Johnson girl.

She flew from England.

By the way, have you cracked that one about the difference between Amy, Al, and yourself? The first are Flying and Singing Fools respectively.

Yellow Mask will make money. Let us hold it to the

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director's eternal credit that he has assessed its value pretty closely.

And thus to *Murder*. Hitchcock by now must be an admitted authority on the black arts, having graduated with *Blackmail*.

Hitchcock, of course, is an interesting phenomenon, said he, adopting the quietly introspective style. A rambler rose on an arctic slope. Or perhaps it would be better to say a walrus on Everest. He has his moments. He is the one man in this country who can think cinema. He may never achieve half of what he thinks. One cannot expect too much of the British industry. Indeed, one expects nothing of any attitude, even one's own.

But Hitchcock's moments justify themselves. Obviously *Murder* had its moments. It may not achieve real unity, but it comes nearer than any of its homemade competitors. And after *Two Worlds*!

There is a suggestion in *Murder* of a talk-film idea which personally has appealed to me from the start of the dialogue film. Too much, in my opinion, is made of the deliberate distortion of sound to make a counterpoint to the visual rhythm. For myself, I have always been interested in the direct linking of sound and picture by the employment of a literary translation in the dialogue of a similar rhythm as is used in the montage.

In this way a speeding of development with a very considerable increase in dramatic content can be obtained cinematically. While we are box-office bound we are justified in attempting compromise.

In the jury sequence in *Murder* Hitchcock has discovered

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this same idea. The acceleration of cutting, coupled with the dialogue rhythm, speeding up, speeding up. Speech montage. So much more fundamental than that psychologically interesting " Knife " episode in *Blackmail*.

Much could be said about Hitchcock, his use of the detached camera. Documentation. His efforts to weld literary satire into cinematic development, the old fault for which Lubitsch has to answer. His idea-fertility, the use of dialogue as a thought-medium—a throwback to the Elizabethan stage, this.

Anyway, Hitchcock gives the screen ideas, in which it is so bankrupt. *Murder* has several ideas, flung off, used to serve a purpose and then forgotten.

Regarded as a motion picture *Murder* is a praiseworthy effort, quite the best thing this country has done. Looked at from the straightforward angle of the film-goer it gets dangerously near the highbrow, which means to say that the fact it has brains may militate against it.

Its literary link is too strongly noticeable. Too much footage is occupied with the novelists' preoccupation regarding the psychology of crime. There is much too much of the stuff that Clemence Dane is made of.

The evolution of an attitude. The surprise that someone's cinematic attitude may be worthwhile. The problem as to whether Hitchcock's attitude is compatible with the film-goers'.

We have lately, said he, adopting his best impersonal style, been interesting ourselves in the evolution of an attitude.

And in most cases much has been found wanting.

HUGH CASTLE.

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CHECK-UP ON TECHNIQUE

“ At least I know where I am standing ! ”

Anyone who says that apropos modern cinema means he is standing still. News, in the journalist's sense of the word, comes from America by every post. Surrounded with the contents of the mail-bag for the last six months, one cannot help doubts ; still, this seems to be the most needful précis :

The “ negative microphone ” indicates that sound-proofed studios may be a luxury. When sounds are made near two microphones, one mike gets a larger share of the signal than the other ; unless, of course, the sounds occur at calculated distances. But, sounds travelling from a distance reach microphones, which are reasonably near apart, with equal intensity. The further away the sound is and the closer together the microphones are, the more accurate is the approximation. . . . These two facts form, roughly, the theory on which the system of “ negative microphone ” is based.

A director, let us suppose, is rehearsing a scene not far from a main road. The background noises of the road (especially when a tram passes) might drown out sections of the dialogue. At the present stage of technical proficiency, it would be impossible to record a scene and, afterwards, eliminate the unwanted noises. So, the director places two

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microphones scientifically ; one round which the actors cluster and the other about ten yards away. Now both microphones will have an equal share of traffic signals from one hundred yards, yet one will record the actors with far greater definition. The signals of the two microphones can, finally, be electrically superimposed in contrary directions ; similar electric impulses, of opposite signs, mutually cancelling one another.

It may happen that microphones will be invented for the special elimination of each likely kind of noise interference. Already, there is a wind-proof mike on the market, the mike being protected by a light wire frame covered with airplane cloth. Or, dubbing, that is the addition of sound at a later stage, might be far more widely resorted to since it has been found practical to splice extra frames into the sound track in order to achieve exact synchronisation.

Next ; the mechanized lens of the eye has not escaped the attention paid to the lens-ear.

Specialists have written that any further refinements with glass might be beyond the physical possibilities of the material, and the problem of the secondary spectrum has only been solved in microscopic objectives of fluorite. However, the ordinary film stock of yesterday was insensitive to red ; the optician, therefore, was able to ignore the red focus, chromatically correcting for the blues and greens. Trouble came with PAN. The remedy was to send the minimum focus up to green, bringing red and violet to the same focal length. Colour photography (to pursue the history) reintroduced the question of higher apertures : an aperture which permits of sufficient exposure for colour photography does not give the requisite depth of field. . . Lenses, too, are dragged

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into the sound-business-scuffle. The omission of one degree of electrical amplification, afforded by increase of light transmitted through the optical system of the sound-on-film reproduction, would considerably reduce present distortions.

Studio workers, contending with alarums of modern lenses (stereoscopy is going to complicate the cameraman's job to such a degree that he will be compelled to learn some optics) and microphones, are faced, also, with a revolution of film stock.

The International Safety Films Company declare that their safety film of transparent paper is "in no way related to the cellulose acetate family, and has greater physical toughness and durability." A manifesto promises that it will not generate explosive gasses on rise of temperature, nor, in combustion, will it liberate poisonous fumes. ("Combustion, which is only very slow!") The industry, indeed, calls for some assurance, for ancient varieties of non-flam deteriorated rapidly and, occasionally, exhibited inflammable tendencies during storage, besides suffering permanently from grain, shrinkage and buckling. The new company, though, state that their stock will sweep away insurance premiums, and the day is hopefully awaited when a daily journal, in the shape of a small roll of paper, will be taken in at every house.

Also on the market, at the moment, are one or two processes for lengthening the life of current brands of film stock. One idea is to coat the surface of the film with hard gelatine. This not only saves the moisture of the emulsion but imparts a relief to the photography.

Wide film was used by Dr. Marey in 1886; the present size being a mere convention. Of the new wide stock there

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are three standards, 56, 65 and 70 mm. Exhibitors, understandably, are anxious to press for wide film only in the negative, which could be optically printed on 35 mm. stock. Thus, grain disfigurements might become neglectible; meanwhile, the theatre might temporise with a revolving turret on the projector.

With a turret on the projector it is possible to adjust the large picture to suit the size of the stage. Should the bottom of the screen be close to the stage the large picture can be set out of centre of the small picture. Ross has a variable focus projector lens; the optical principle being that of the telescope. "The operation of a simple racking lever on the lens mount causes the component lenses of the Ross unit to move from the gate aperture and closer to each other." An increase in the picture size up to thirty per cent. is obtainable. But, the centre of the small picture is the centre of the larger. Again, there is said to be no limit (the difficulty of supplying a porous screen of large dimension having been overcome by the Savelite Screen Company) to the size to which Pilgrim can enlarge the picture by his device of gradually withdrawing masking curtains.

Developing (don't you dare! . . .) has not developed in comparison with other cinematic matters. The air, sometimes, is baffled a few more times before it comes into the drying room, or the air is directed by fans to fixed spots; nevertheless, machines abound with a hideous capacity of 7,000 feet per hour!

The exhibitor is the spoilt darling of the inventor. The absorption values of chairs in his theatre have been tested. (Mohair chairs have sound absorption value of 2.6 to 3.6

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units, etc.) It has been proved that unholstered chairs have a balancing effect, rendering the size of the audience less acoustically important. . . Deaf patrons have been given satisfaction with "a vibrating element surrounded by a sheet of rubber and attached to a wire, which can be plugged into the sound reproducers in any wired cinema." Vibrations are received *via* the bones of the jaw, the listener sipping sounds through a straw. . . It is beyond the control of a single person to give a check-up on all the inventions that have pampered the exhibitor. The most far-reaching are :

1. The production of the two shilling photo-electric cell.

Selenium cells were, for some time, considered the most sensitive. Alas, the sensitivity slowly vanishes. Alkali cells have taken their place; these need a polarisation of 200 volts. The two shilling cell is of certain galena crystals which, when touched by silver wire, show, at the point of contact, light-electric sensitivity. No additional polarisation phenomenon is necessary. It has ever been the aim of cells to stabilise the decrement in current with the decrement in light; the new cell allows the transformation of light energy into electric energy to take place without inertia.

2. The Cue-Meter, a new American appliance revealing the number of feet left in the top spool box of the projection machine, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's Automatic Fader Control. Both ideas are intended to supersede the cue sheet. M-G-M do not ask the exhibitor to buy fresh apparatus; it is a printing operation carried out by a squeeze mat control. Surface noises are reduced as the black mat narrows the sound track.

Other ingenious new inventions appear to have little rela-

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tion to the demands of public, renter, exhibitor, or studio executive. For example, the many astonishing continuous-motion projectors would, at cursory glance, hardly justify their substitution of rocking mirrors for the Maltese Cross by sparing sprocket holes.

Then, who dare predict the demands of the cinematic tomorrow?

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

A Tear for Lycidas.

During last year's London season we saw and heard one Talkie, *Hearts in Dixie* and wrote thereof in *Close Up* and foreswore our sex by asserting, in bold, masculine, side-taking, either-or fashion, that no matter what degree of perfection might presently be attained by the recording apparatus we were certain that the talkie, as distinct from the sound-film, will never be able to hold a candle to the silent film.

This year, therefore, though we knew there must be small local halls still carrying on, and hoped that our own little Bethel, which we had left last autumn ominously "closed for repairs," might have taken courage to re-open, we felt that we were returning to a filmless London. Resignedly.

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There was, there always is, one grand compensation : we came fully into our heritage of silent films. " The Film," all the films we had seen, massed together in the manner of a single experience—a mode of experience standing alone and distinct amongst the manifolds we assemble under this term—and with some few of them standing out as minutely remembered units, became for us treasure laid up. Done with in its character of current actuality, inevitably alloyed, and beginning its rich, cumulative life as memory. Again and again, in this strange " memory " (which, however we may choose to define it, is, at the least, past, present and future powerfully combined) we should go to the pictures ; we should revisit, each time with a difference, and, since we should bring to it increasing wealth of experience, each time more fully, certain films stored up within. But to the cinema we should go no more.

Arriving, we found our little local hall still wearing its mournful white lie. All over London we met—there is no need to describe what we met, what raucously hailed us from the façade of every sort of cinema. Our eyes learned avoidance, of façade, newspaper column, hoarding and all the rest.

But ears escape less readily and we heard, as indeed, bearing in mind the evolution of pianola and gramophone, we had expected to hear, of the miracles of realism achieved by certain speech-films. Of certain beautiful voices whose every subtle inflection, every sigh, came across with a clarity impossible in the voice speaking from the stage. People who last year had wept with us had now gone over to the enemy and begged us to see at least this and that : *too* marvellous.

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Others declared that each and every kind of speech film they had seen had been *too* dire.

We accepted the miracle so swiftly accomplished, the perfected talkie, but without desire, gladly making a present of it. Wishing it well in its world that is so far removed from that of the silent film. Saw it going ahead to meet, and compete with, the sound-film. Heard both rampant all over the world.

Driven thus to the wall, we improvised a theorem that may or may not be sound: that it is impossible both to hear and to see, to the limit of our power of using these faculties, at one and the same moment. We firmly believe that it is sound.

The two eloquences, the appeal to the eye and the appeal to the ear, however well fused, however completely they seem to attain their objective—the spectator-auditor—with the effect of a single aesthetic whole, must, in reality, remain distinct. And one or the other will always take precedence in our awareness. And though it is true that their approximate blending can work miracles the miracle thus worked is incomparably different from that worked by either alone.

Think, for example, of the difference between music heard coming, as it were, out of space and music attacking from a visible orchestra. Recall that an intense concentration on listening will automatically close the eyes. That for perfect seeing of a landscape, work of art, beloved person, or effectively beautiful person, we instinctively desire silence. And agree, therefore, that there neither is, nor ever can be, any substitute for the silent film. Agree that the secret of its power lies in its undiluted appeal to a single faculty.

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It may be urged that to the blind the world is a sound-film whose images must be constructed by the extra intelligent use of the remaining senses helped out by memory, while to the deaf it is a silent film whose meaning cannot be reached without some contrived substitute for speech. That deaf people are more helpless and are usually more resentful of, less resigned to, their affliction than are the happier blind. And that therefore the faculty of hearing is more important than that of sight : the inference being that the soundless spectacle is a relatively lifeless spectacle.

Those who reason thus have either never seen a deaf spectator of a silent film or, having seen him, have failed to reflect upon the nature of his happiness. For the time being he is raised to the level of the happy, skilful blind exactly because his missing faculty is perfectly compensated. Because what he sees is complete without sound, he is as one who hears. But take a blind man to a never so perfect sound-film and he will see but little of the whole.

In daily life, it is true, the faculty of hearing takes precedence of the faculty of sight and is in no way to be compensated. But on the screen the conditions are exactly reversed. For here, sight *alone* is able to summon its companion faculties : given a sufficient degree of concentration on the part of the spectator, a sufficient rousing of his collaborating creative consciousness. And we believe that the silent film secures this collaboration to a higher degree than the speech-film just because it enhances the one faculty that is best able to summon all the others : the faculty of vision.

Yet we have admitted, we remember admitting, that without musical accompaniment films have neither colour nor

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sound! That any kind of musical accompaniment is better than none. The film can use almost any kind of musical accompaniment. But it is the film that uses the music, not the music the film. And the music, invisible, "coming out of space," enhances the faculty of vision. To admit this is not to admit the sound-film as an improvement on the silent film though it may well be an admission of certain possible sound-films as lively rivals thereof.

Life's "great moments" are silent. Related to them, the soundful moments may be compared to the falling of the crest of a wave that has stood poised in light, translucent, for its great moment before the crash and dispersal. To this peculiar intensity of being, to each man's individual intensity of being, the silent film, with musical accompaniment, can translate him. All other forms of presentation are, relatively, diversions. Diversions in excelsis, it may be. But diversions. Essential, doubtless, to those who desire above all things to be "taken out of themselves," as is their definition of the "self."

Perhaps the silent film is solitude and the others association.

* * *

Wandering at large, we found ourselves unawares, not by chance, we refuse to say by chance, in a dim and dusty by-street: one of those elderly dignified streets that now await, a little wistfully, the inevitable re-building. Giving shelter meanwhile to the dismal eddyings and scuttlings of wind-blown refuse: grey dust, golden straw, scraps of trodden paper. Almost no traffic. Survival, in a neglected central backwater, of something of London's former quietude.

Having, a moment before, shot breathlessly across the

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rapids of a main thoroughfare, we paused, took breath, looked about us and saw the incredible. A legend, not upon one of those small, dubious façades still holding their own against the fashion, but upon that of the converted Scala theatre: Silent Films. Continuous Performance. *Two Days. The Gold Rush.*

Why, we asked, stupefied, had we not been told? Why, in the daily lists, which still, hopelessly hopeful, we scanned each day, was there no mention of this brave Scala?

A good orchestra. Behind it the heart of Chaplain's big wandering film: the dream wherein the sleeping host entertains his tragically absent guests with the *Oceana Roll*, showing itself to an empty house.

To the joy of re-discovering a lost enchantment was added strange new experience. Within us was all we had read and heard and imaginatively experienced of the new conventions. All that at moments had made us sound-fans. Enhancing critical detachment. We were seeing these films with new eyes. They stood the test. These new films, we said, may be the companions, they can never be the rivals of the silent film. The essential potency of any kind of silent film, "work of art" or other, remains untouched.

Later we saw *The Three Musketeers* and agreed, perhaps with Fairbanks, we trust with Fairbanks, that if melodrama be faithfully sought all other things are added unto it. And we were looking forward to *Metropolis* and *The Circus*, when suddenly the theatre closed.

The experiment, we gathered, had not been a success.

But what, we would respectfully enquire of the Scala management, what is the use of winking in the dark? What

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is the use of having a silent season, in an unfrequented by-street, and leaving London's hundreds of thousands of silent-film lovers to become aware of it by a process of intuition? Advertisement is surely less costly than an empty house. And we are prepared to wager that any house bold enough to embark on a silent season and to advertise it at least to the extent of listing it in the dailies will gather its hundreds for each showing.

[Humble apologies to *The Boltons* cinema in Kensington and the Palais de Luxe in Piccadilly; of whose current loyalty to the silent film the writer is informed too late for tribute in this article.]

DOROTHY RICHARDSON.

DOCUMENTATION: THE BASIS OF CINEMATOGRAPHY

For me, the soul of the cinema obstinately persists in abiding in Documentation. And it is in this domain, too long left fallow, that he who without profanation may be called an artist will find at once his richest source of inspiration and the fullest liberty to realise his conceptions. Mature talents, moreover, disgusted by the discouragements of the cinema, languishing in its cage that is lit only by the simulacrum of



From *To-Day*, a new film by Esther Schub, well known as a composer of news-reel material. A Sovkino film.





From *First Girl*, directed by Golub and Sadkovitch, young graduates from the State School of Cinematography.



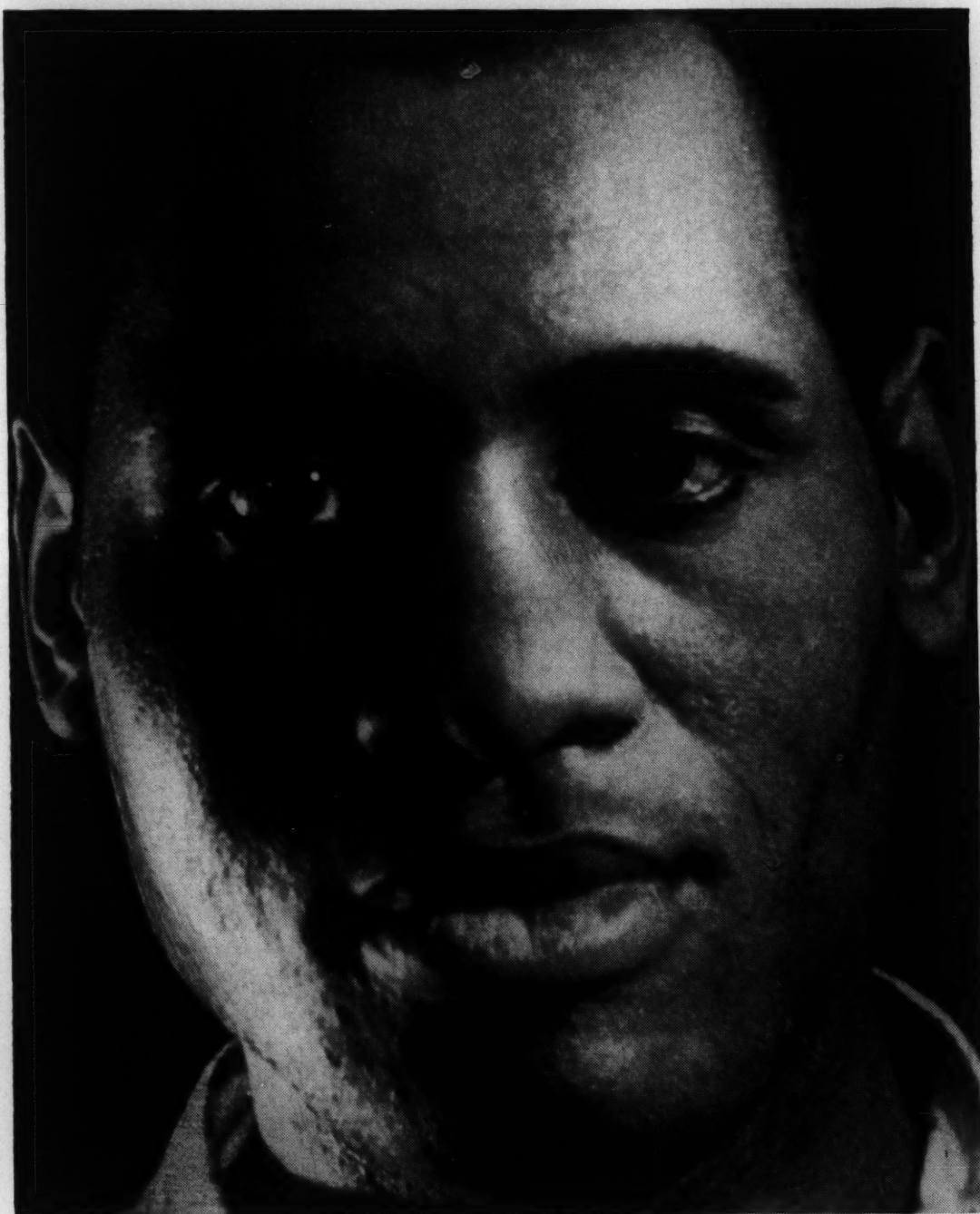
From *The Silent Don*, from the novel by Sholokhov, the filming of which has just been finished by O. Preobrashenskaya, director of *The Women of Ryazan (The Village of Sin)*.



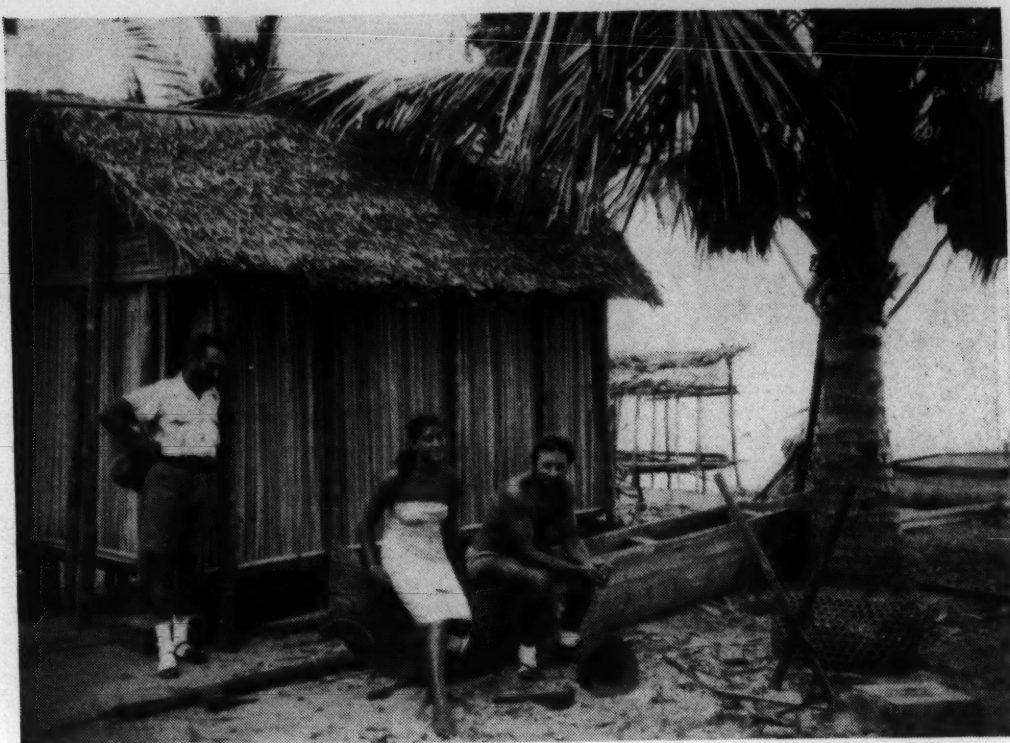
From *The Earth*, Dovjenko's new film for Wufku.



Fallen Gods, an educational film depicting the fight of the Soviets against venereal diseases among the buriats and Mongol tribes.
A Vostokino film.



Paul Robeson, the dark hero of *Borderline*, which will be seen in England during the Autumn.



A production still from Leon Poirier's *Caïn*. Thomy Bourdelle and Rama Tahe, the stars, with Poirier.



Thomy Bourdelle as Caïn in Leon Poirier's film, which is to be released in November.

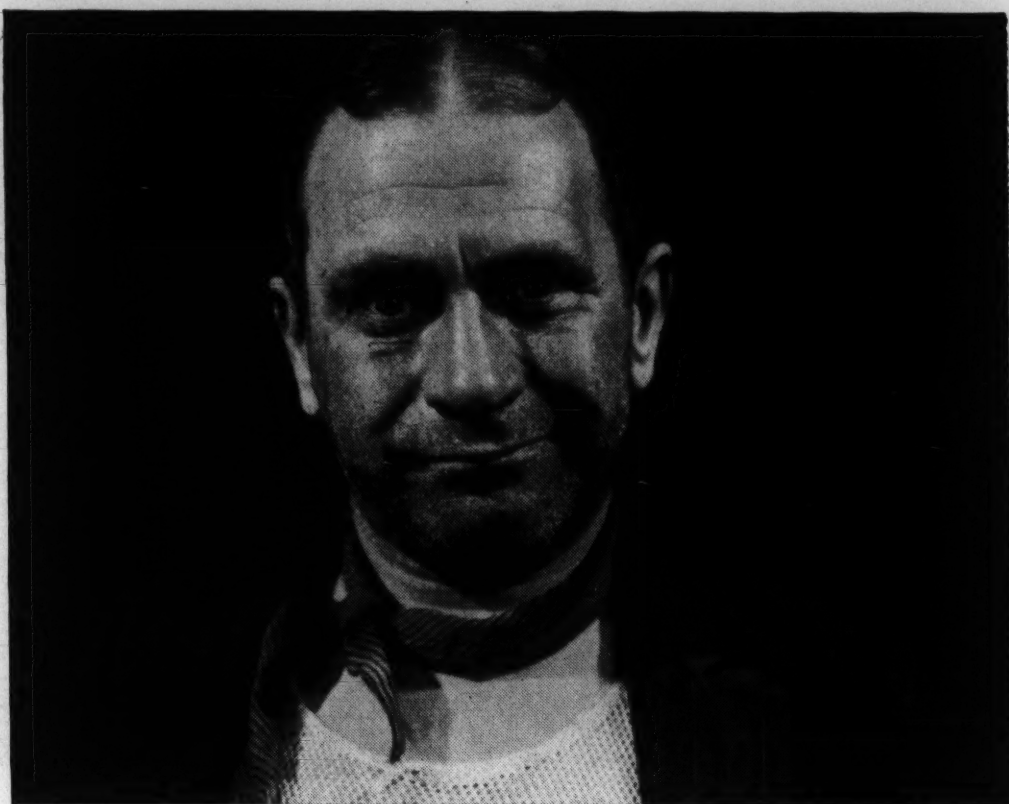


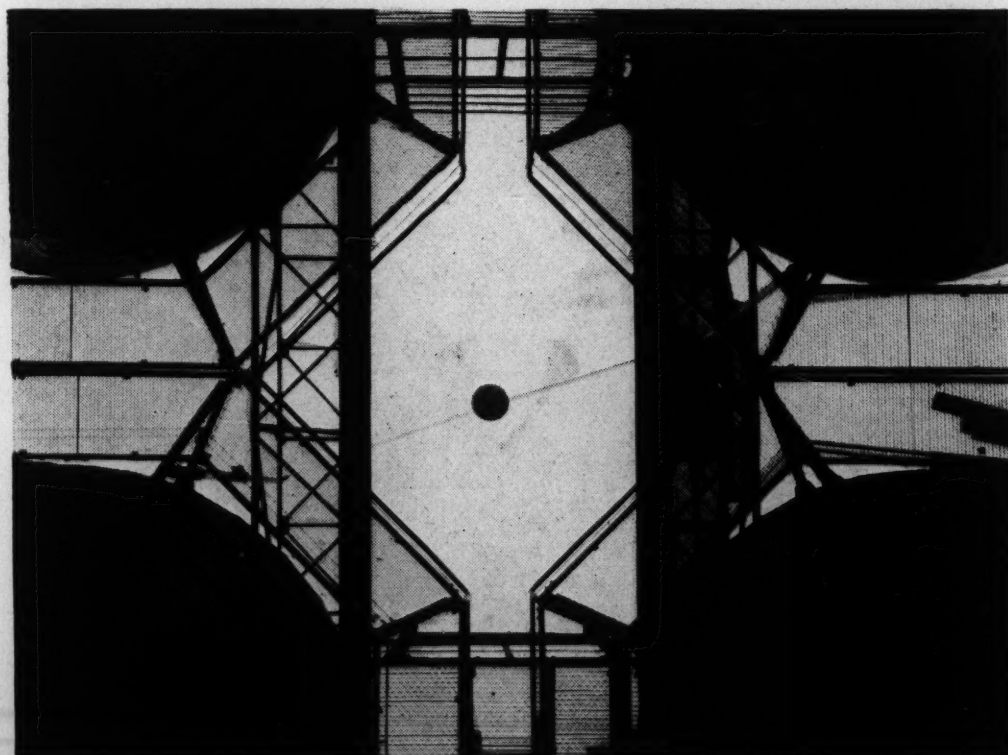
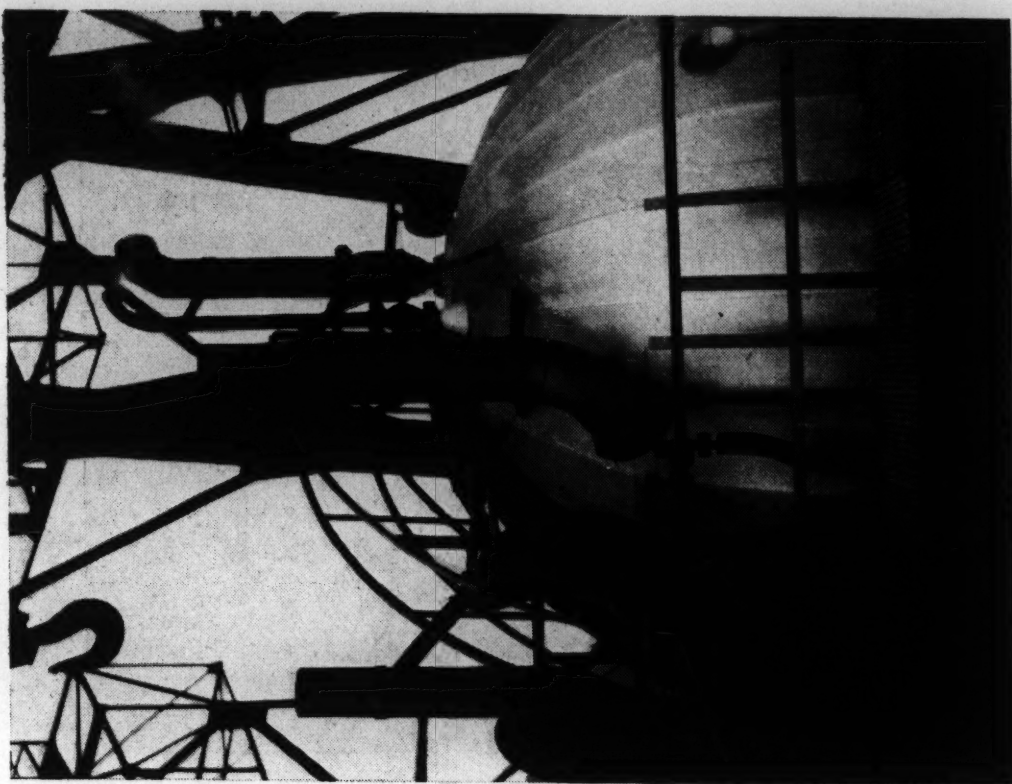
Photo: Ufa

Kurt Lilien as Zeuge Kulicke in the Ufa-Tonfilm *Hokuspokus* (*Murder for Sale*), directed by Gustav Ucicky, photographed by Carl Hoffman.



Photo: Ufa

From *Hokuspokus* (*Murder for Sale*). Well-chosen types for the jury.



Photos by Hans Casparius, taken during his sea travels round Africa.



Impressive views of the ship prior to departure and at anchor. Mr. Casparius has made a film of the cruise.

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sunlight, dream of revitalising their creative energy at a purer source. Does not Murian make common cause with Flaherty of the exotic islands, apostle of the natural cinema?

* * *

Cutting through life's surrounding atmosphere the documentary cinema has shown us its unsuspected aspects. For example: the rhythms of the life of a great town, the synthesis of the universe attempted by Walter Ruttmann in *La Symphonie d'une Grande Ville* and *La Mélodie du Monde*, and René Clair's *La Tour* and Joris Ivens' *Le Pont d'Acier*, poetic frescoes of metallurgy. And the curious picturesqueness — not in the Michelin sense — of Lacombe's *La Zone*. Poirier's reels, *La Croisière blanche*, *La Croisière noire*, evocations of journeys one may never make, the grandeurs of natural décor felt by Epstein (*L'Affiche*, *La Belle Nivernaise*), nostalgia of Norwegian fiords and the distant horizons of the Far-West, the strange personality of an object or a machine, seeming suddenly to take on life when thrown upon the screen. And the invisible made visible by the miracle of acceleration, (*La Vie des Plantes*) and of slow-motion, (*L'Eclatement d'une bulle de savon*). Films such as *Gardiens de Phare*, *Tour au Large*, *Finis Terrae*, certain efforts of Abel Gance, dominated by the gigantic personality of the sea: that mask with a thousand expressions one might watch, armed with a camera, for a life-time.

* * *

It is especially in the documentary film rather than in the studio-film—where, in the interest of the objective exigencies, everything must, or at any rate should, be re-created—that we may distinguish what is photogenic from what is not.

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Why is it that reels taken from life are so often dull and lifeless? Why are we so often taken aback by the flat reproduction of a landscape our eyes have found infinitely charming, by its reduction to the semblance of a picture-postcard saddened by the screen's dark frame? And why, on the other hand, will an insignificant little roadway suddenly take on majesty?

It is because our own eye and that of our camera neither see nor reason in the same way. *We must understand with the one and see with the other*: apothegm our producers seem still to ignore.

Yesterday, to-day- at this instant, we have had unawares before our eyes a marvellous film whose moving aspects will reveal their integral significance only in passing through the camera's mechanical eye: this drop of dew rolls along this leaf as despairingly as does the tear down the face of that child: carried along by the Niagara of a streamlet, this ant is drowned before our powerless eyes, and we tremble for the fate of the fly that a spider, monstrous, almost filling the screen, is about to pounce upon.

These are film-dramas that no producer plus blond ingénues can rival. But if, on the other hand, we try never so cunningly to reproduce the glories of a rose-garden, or the atmosphere of a spring-scented landscape, the miracle stops dead: we have been decoyed by elements foreign to the cinema. Some years ago Jean Epstein stated this phenomenon with mathematical precision: "*every aspect of objects, persons and souls,*" he said "*is photogenic whose moral quality is increased by cinematic reproduction. No aspect*

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is photogenic or relevant to cinematography that is not intensified by cinematic reproduction."

* * *

It is useless to shoot a burning house with the idea of expressing the grandeur and horror of fire. A short time ago René Moreau brought back from New York a small film, some of whose photography was quite charming but which failed entirely to express the deep poetry of a modern city. Why? Probably because the author had photographed a city that calls to be cinematised. Since then he has given us *Venice*, a subject more docile to his painter's temperament. Personally I have attempted in *Autour de l'Argent* to render, by strictly cinematic devices, the febrility of a ciné-studio in full work. In this subject there is incomparable photogenic material for anyone possessing the cinematic eye. And if I had not been held up by innumerable material obstacles I would claim no credit for having accomplished my "cinematic indiscretions." With *Quand les Epis se courbent* Van Canstein and I have aimed at evoking the entire photogenic material of the peaceful life of the fields.

* * *

Irony apart, it is already long ago that the boxing of sardines and the tanning of rabbit-skins served as stop-gaps in cinema programmes. Documentation has claimed its rights. It even provokes discussion. There are "romantic" documentationists and "pure" documentationists. Outcries. Struggles. No solution is reached for the very good reason that there is nothing to solve. Between pure documentation, representing more or less succinctly experiences taken from

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life (the first Arctic films, *The Smile of Lloyd-George* and romantic documentation, *Nanook, Moana*) wherein similar experiences in the interest of improved cinematic rendering, are interpreted and idealised by the artist composing the strip, we may not, I think, establish a preference. It would be a mistake to embellish *La Croisière de l'U-35*, but we lack the courage to regret that *White Shadows in the South Seas* was an entirely fictitious work.

Let us rather beware of certain films presented as authentic and actually a gross abuse of the confidence of the public. They are the result of a more or less adroit mingling of scenes taken from life with constructed scenes, the whole captioned in a manner at once arbitrary and childish. Unforgettable is a scene (was it not in *Milak, Chasseur de Groenland*?) where the camera-man complacently films the expedition's dog occupied in devouring the expedition's last provisions—according to caption—to the great consternation—again according to caption—of its last member.

These tasteless farces will disappear when their trickeries become unacceptable to a public that is daily growing more discriminating.

* * *

All that has been said tends to elucidate the necessity for enlarging the meaning we have been in the habit of reading into the term "documentary."

White Shadows is documentary. But so also is the exploration of the human face that is called *The Passion of Jeanne d'Arc*.

JEAN DREVILLE.

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ACTION

In the general fluster and excitement attending the advent of the talkies, an important element of cinema patronage was quite overlooked. Producers and exhibitors alike forgot the children. Only recently have they become conscious of the fact that juvenile attendance showed a marked falling off coincidentally with the introduction of phonofilms. In their eagerness to sophisticate the screen with speech, their psychological machinery slipped a cog. The child's need and valuation of pictures was left out of the reckoning.

By every reason of their inherent muteness the movies were obliged to tell their stories more or less clearly in pictorial presentment. Comedies and "Westerns" in particular lent themselves ideally to this elementary method of story telling. Action spoke more loudly than words, and much more vividly withal. Charlie Chaplin and Tom Mix were veritable heroes to millions of youngsters, because of what they did. What they said was of no moment or was supplied in imagination by each child according to his own simple notion of fitness. Their films, together with those of others of like character, needed no vocal interpretation.

But these child-enticing features of cinema programmes vanished with the coming of the speakies. Oral wisecracking

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was in large measure substituted for action. The comic gave way to "refined comedy." The rip-roaring "Western" was replaced by the out-of-door spoken drama. To the child the movies ceased to exist. He had been robbed of his birthright, and in token of his rebellion against this injustice he forsook the cinema.

Only Chaplin, at the time, appears to have sensed the situation. He obstinately refused to become vocal. But at the same time, held by the laziness and indifference which have lately characterized his attitude toward picture production, he made no effort to supply the suddenly developed void. His *City Lights*, already under way at the outbreak of the talkies, is still dragging along with nonchalant unconcern. Had he the energy and interest of his younger days he might have returned to the activity of those days and turned out, as he did then, a picture a month. However, he now agrees with many of his admirers, that he is more artist than clown and must therefore not demean himself by too frequent contact with the circus-loving bourgeoisie.

In the meantime, with its accustomed canniness, Hollywood has awakened to the situation presented by the falling off of juvenile patronage. Not that it will return to the silent movies. It will never do that. But it has realized that speech and sound are not incompatible with self-interpretative action. It has learned, on the contrary, that these adjuncts if properly employed can be made to accentuate childish interest and pleasure.

The first attempt in this direction has been the animated cartoon with synchronized sound. And no cinema produc-

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tion has ever met with like popular approval. A child today will uncomplainingly sit through an incomprehensible full-length talking picture for the sake of a single reel of *Mickey Mouse*. Taking their cue from this, every one of the larger studios is now putting out a series of these vocalized cartoons.

Also, Mack Sennett, the greatest of all comedy producers, but whose genius had gone to seed in the overworked field of silent films, has again entered the lists in response to the need of the child and the child-minded. Speech and sound have given him new elements with which to play and with which to amplify his ingenuities. And judged by what he has already done in this enlarged field, a Mack Sennett audible comedy is destined to insure a full house anywhere, at any time, and to revive the popularity he enjoyed in the pristine days of custard-pie mummery.

The two-reel "Western" and the hair-raising serial, which were abruptly discarded two years ago, are likewise making their reappearance in recognition of the necessity of catering to the child element of the public. But they, too, like the comedy, are heightened in effectiveness and appeal by the discriminating use of voice and noise.

Unless we are upon the eve of a distinctly new era in picture making, in which two broad classes of patrons are to be served with separate cinema fare according to their respective levels of mentality, the vocalized modifying of these restored types of film marks the beginning of a general modification all along the line, whereby action will again be chiefly depended upon for the telling of a story, with speech relegated to the office of mere accompaniment or emphasis.

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At all events, some change is due. Whatever it may be, however, it will not be a retrograde step—a return to silence. On the contrary, it will bring to the screen a new development, and a development which must be credited primarily to the rebellion of the child against the initial over-accentuation of speech and the consequent hurt of specific value and attractiveness of motion pictures.

CLIFFORD HOWARD.

AVENUE PAVILION

(Third Edition.)

So the Avenue Pavilion is to change its policy once more. After a long period of success as the only theatre where intelligent films could be seen regularly, the Gaumont-British Circuit decided that it must go over to talkies. After a few weeks of mediocre talk films, one hears that almost immediately it is to become London's first News Reel Cinema. Fox Movietone in America, who have several successful News Reel Theatres in the States are anxious to establish a similar venture in London and the Avenue Pavilion has been selected as the centre for the try-out.

Programmes will be of one hour's duration, consisting of

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sound news reels, Mickey Mouse cartoons and short interests, running from noon to 11 p.m.

Fox Movietone, known in Britain as British Movietone News, contemplate organising a daily edition and their American chief is here for that purpose.

It is difficult to prophesy success or otherwise. Similar ventures, on a half-hearted scale have been attempted in London before, and they have all failed. That, of course, was before the news reels added sound and dialogue. It is difficult to imagine the new policy smashing the Box office unless the quality of the news reels shows a radical and sustained improvement. Most of them nowadays are just too terrible for words. Their choice of subjects is invariably limited to about three—the inspection of troops by Royalty, sporting events and speeches by gentlemen whose intelligence is in inverse ratio to their lung power. A little less noise and a little more creative imagination in selection and presentation might make all the difference.

R. BOND.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

ACTOR'S VIEWPOINT.

"I have played in nine films," said Ernest Thesiger, "and I am very cross about it."

Should I meet a man who knows all about Eisenstein's theory of relativity I regret to record that I would not be deeply moved, the reason being (so arrogant are men) that I know relatively nothing about Eisenstein; but as we have all tried to act (those *screaming* family charades) I could not resist a feeling of intimidation for one whose work is so assured.

"There is no organization in British films," Mr. Thesiger continued brusquely as though he had just discovered this alarming fact. "Every minute of my life is organized, so I begrudge the idle hours of sitting around the set."

Now, I remembered reading, in his book of memoirs, that Mr. Thesiger has a habit of electrifying his fellow travellers by taking out his crochet work in railway carriages; so, I could not refrain from saying, in a small voice. "Why didn't you take your crochet work with you?"

"But I always worked on the set," he declared without a blush.

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"What did they say?" I demanded excitedly.

"Unprintable," he sighed.

"Please, please tell me," I begged.

"———," he answered.

"Unprintable," I agreed.

Cursing to myself the laws of censorship I let my eyes fall on the bowls of rose leaves and gentle watercolours which E. T. used to exhibit in Bond Street before he became an actor. Soothed by the delightful calm of the room, I began to forget my mission; Mr. Thesiger, however, had organized his day and he went on being interviewed whether I listened or not.

"Always," he declared crisply, "I put the stage first. On the stage I can play the part of a young boy; by sheer personal magnetism I can make the audience accept me in such a role. The cinema, on the other hand, is a *visual-aural* and not a *mental* entertainment. Directors? Of course, they do everything in the films; copying out passages from great authors does not make one a writer, if you see what I mean?"

But my time on the schedule was up and I could not tell him what I saw.

O. B.

A LETTER.

Edmund Meisel has written to us with details of the sound version of *Potemkin*.

"I think that *Potemkin* is much better and more interest-

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ing in the sound version. Besides the actors, we have twenty five musicians and a talking and singing chorus. The musicians are very well known artistes; each one is a soloist. The recording is made by *Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft*. The producer, Lippel, who wrote the German words himself, has already successfully made several sound versions of silent pictures. There are not too many talking sequences, the whole sound version being thought as a symphony. As you know *Potemkin* is a good subject for a treatment like that; all the talking is done to explain the plot shortly and *to give an exciting speed*. We intend to make an English version soon."

"I am working on *Stürme über dem Montblanc*, which is the first talking picture of Dr. Franck."

We wish Mr. Meisel all the luck the Fates failed to give him in London.

O. B.

FROM THE EMPIRE.

(A catalogue with a Moral.)

Whenever we see an Indian film we ask ourself whether it is an act of providence or done on purpose.

For the sake of completeness, and as a warning, *Close Up* might list some of the native pictures shown recently in London.

Krishnakanta's Will (14, 453 feet) with Amrita Lal Bose

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and Seeta Devi : a picture with stilted titles, a triangle plot and no recommendations. *Anarkali* (10, 594 feet) with Sulochana; a tedious patchwork of the usual impossible length. *The Tigress* (9, 651 feet) directed by Chandulah Shah; a "small hall" affair with slightly better photography. Others include: *Durghese Nandini* (12, 372 feet) with Seeta Devi, *Madhuri* (6, 900 feet) directed by Chowdhary, and *Sarala* (10, 650).

What is more, the Quota has also produced for us some Australian films. Even the interest of quoting the length is denied. *Far Paradise* though, was directed by the Sisters McDonagh. Ingenuous Australian flicks like *Jewelled Nights* and *Fettered Love*, two of the last to be trade shown, might add their titles to the list to strengthen somebody's case.

O. B.

BIG BUSINESS.

It is not until the exhibitors start kicking against guarantees and sharing terms and disc charges that we learn that both exhibitors and renters are starving, and that poverty stalks Wardour Street and High Street, Kensington, alike.

Take this from a Press report :

"Paramount Publix Corporation estimates its consolidated net profit for the six months ending June last, after all taxes and charges, at £1,686,000.

Reading further we see that this is a record, and is about

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65 per cent. ahead of the profit for the corresponding period last year.

The estimated profit for the three months ending June, 1930, is only \$3,600,000.

We sympathise.

The case of Warner Brothers (whom history will worship as the creators of Rin Tin Tin and Sonny Boy) makes depressing reading.

Their net profits for the year ending August 31, 1929, were three and a half million pounds. This was just a miserable 744.6 per cent. over the previous year.

But now comes the news that owing to "rapid expansion and disappointing summer earnings" they have passed a dividend due on the common stock, although paying the regular quarterly dividend of 55 cents per share on preferred stock.

How very, very sad.

R. BOND.

SACRILEGE.

According to American papers, Universal intend to put out *The White Hell of Pitz Palu* with a running dialogue commentary supplied by Graham McNamee, their star news reel reporter.

"THE VOICE OF THE ONE AND ONLY GRAHAM MCNAMEE" screams a Trade announcement. "A new type of picture . . . astonishing . . . bewildering. . .

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THE ONLY NEW THING IN TALKING PICTURES SINCE TALKING PICTURES BEGAN."

"NEVER ANYTHING LIKE IT," says the *Washington Herald*.

We are astonished, we are bewildered, we are sure that there has never been anything like it before, and, we hope, never again.

Mr. Graham McNamee's wise-cracks, and "Oh Boy, Look at This" stuff are bad enough in the news reels, but when "the best loved voice in the world" starts on this wonderful production of Dr. Fanck and Pabst audiences would be justified in making some sort of protest.

R. BOND.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

Despite an obvious element of incongruity, the continued influx of European talent is lending substance to Hollywood's self-rating as a world centre of artistic culture. At all events, it has made an undoubted beginning in the annual symphony concerts held in the Hollywood Bowl during July and August. These "symphonies under the stars," nightly attended by upwards of fifteen thousand music lovers, have become an established institution, sealed by the approval of international music critics. The popular presentation and enjoyment of Bach, Beethoven, Glück, Brahms, Wagner, Tschaikowsky, Stravinski, Rachmaninoff are no longer an

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exotic novelty. The rendering of these masters and their interpretations by foreign conductors and artistes are accepted as part and parcel of Hollywood's cosmopolitan art life, while the audiences, increasingly augmented by European additions to the cinema colony, are yearly becoming more appreciative of the truly high merit of these out-of-door concerts amid the rugged foothills of the Sierra Madre. The conductors this year, representing Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain, were Alfred Hertz, Karl Krueger, Oscar Strauss, Bernardino Molinari, Pietro Cimini and Enrico Arbos.

* * *

The introduction of the talking picture and the substitution of mechanical music for theatre orchestras brought immediate confusion and alarm to the tens of thousands of professional musicians throughout the country. In an effort to win popular sympathy and support in their dilemma, the American Federation of Musicians inaugurated a nation-wide advertising campaign, denouncing "robot music" and pleading for a return of the old order.

The situation was especially acute in Hollywood and Los Angeles, all of whose leading cinemas made a speciality of large orchestras and other musical features and thus gave support to a great majority of the four thousand members of the local musicians' union.

During the first flush of the phonofilm novelty, the musicians' protest and appeal fell upon deaf ears. Now, however, a reaction has set in; and Hollywood with its ever alert responsiveness to the public's whims is restoring its cinema orchestras and musical stage programmes; an example which is destined shortly to be followed by all the rest of the country.

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An epidemic of law suits has been added to Hollywood's perennial worries this summer. Foremost in the amount of damages claimed is that of the independent producer of *Ingagi* against the Will Hays organization et al., demanding \$3,365,000 because of the defendants' public declaration that *Ingagi* is a fake. Purporting to be an actual picturization of wild African life, its exposers contend that it is a mere hodge podge of scraps from travel pictures made several years ago, including South American scenes and ingeniously interwoven with scenes made in Hollywood, to say nothing of a Hollywood human impersonation of the gorilla star of the film.

Harold Lloyd's comedy, *The Freshman*, has assumed a momentarily serious character, in that its goggle-bedecked star has been sued for a million dollars on the ground of plagiarism. Lloyd has contested the charge both vigorously and indignantly. Not that he would miss a million dollars, but it has hurt his sense of humour to be accused of filching.

Marion Davies and her producing company have been made defendants in a suit for damages to the extent of a quarter of a million, on the allegation that her *Floradora Girl* is an infringement of *Floradora*, a musical comedy of the past generation and all rights to which are still claimed by its author.

Beatrice Lillie, convinced that she was not treated squarely by Warner Brothers, has sued those gentlemen for breach of contract. In their *Show of Shows* she appeared on the screen for a total of nine minutes. For this she received \$15,000. However, it is not the amount of wages over which the titled comedienne is aggrieved. Sixteen hundred and sixty-six

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dollars a minute appears fair enough. Lady Peele's complaint is, that her professional reputation has been damaged fifty-thousand dollars worth by the type of work to which she was limited, in alleged violation of her contract.

Mae Murray is also demanding reparation for asserted injury to her professional standing. She is not as modest in her estimate as Lady Peele, however. She wants \$1,750,000 from Tiffany Productions, Inc., because, in addition to a contended breach of contract, she declares the Tiffany folks did not do her credit in *Peacock Alley*, in which she was starred and which she claims was an "artistic failure," due to the company's neglect and lack of skill.

* * *

Heedful of the growing protests against the character of cinema advertisements, Hollywood producers have united in formulating a code of morals for such advertisements. This follows closely upon the recent code governing picture production, and, as in that case, is not so much dictated by Hollywood's taste as it is by a well justified fear that public disgust may result in materializing the threatened Federal censorship law. Nudity, salacious postures, drinking, profanity, vulgarity, scenes of crimes, ministerial caricatures are some of the specific prohibitions listed in the newly adopted advertising rules. False or misleading statements regarding films are likewise forbidden. Altogether, and quite significantly, the prescript closely parallels that embodied in the pending act of Congress, a synopsis of whose drastic censorship provisions appeared in *Close Up* for July under the title of *Shadow Over Hollywood*.

* * *

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The *M-G-M Barkies* are proving so popular a novelty, that the original schedule of four of these canine films has been increased to twenty or more. The characters are a troupe of trained dogs, headed by "Buster," "Oscar," and "Jiggs." They appear in human clothes, and through a clever system of sound synchronization are also given human voices. For the most part their two-reel talking and singing comedies are parodies of current popular films. They are being done in French, German, and Spanish, as well as English.

C. H.

Skandal um Eva. A Porten-Nero film, directed by G. W. Pabst, photography by Wagner.

We are not always victorious; otherwise it would be dull. So in spite of heroic struggles on the part of one of the finest directors in Europe, in spite too of Wagner at the camera, kitsch remains kitsch. Sound has turned savage and because we would explore new lands with it, shows us what is the average conception of sound; the repetition of often heard noises made into a pattern according to the formulas of the musical comedies of 1900.

One moment at the beginning is excellent; classrooms, the elderly schoolmistress controlling a restive but respectful class, the recitation of a poem by Heine by nervous fumbling school children to the inspector. But from then on we are taken on a picnic in order that Henny Porten (a schoolmistress) may sing to her pupils, we are then introduced to

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a four year old child, so that we may note first his attempts to sing to a musical box, and then his chase throughout the rest of the film of the schoolmistress to whom he must cry "mama" thereby causing scandal. There are pillow fights and songs, never did any scenario writer seize more ravenously upon singing, community and otherwise, and there is a band in a country park, with one real Pabst photograph of a group of moron schoolboys. Everyone in the film has done their best and more, everything that technique and direction and acting could put into a film has been put into it, but it is a grim and losing battle, for nothing could make credible or amusing this repetition of the prehistoric tale of the man who had a four year old son hidden in the country from his fiancée, of how the fiancée found out this dreadful fact and rescued the child, and of how she was accused of being its mother, until everyone chased each other throughout rooms in the proper style up to the final happy ending!

It is said that the film is a tremendous "box office" success. It is said it will carry the German talkie into countries that refuse or censor *Westfront 1918*. It may be necessary to compromise with the present economic situation of the German studios.

But it is useless going to this film for victory or experiment; this time it is knock out to the dragon.

The film *Wir Bauen*, (We Build) by Joris Ivens has been shown with great success at the International Building Congress at Stockholm. It is a pity that England should remain

CLOSE UP

so unaware of the interesting work being done abroad in architecture and construction. Cinematography could bring to the nearest cinema these films which permit the observer to study details of building far more easily than if he were struggling with an unfamiliar landscape and language, in the actual country. Another reason for united action on the part of all film societies until the present regulations as to customs duty and censorship are modified.

We are requested by the commission for Educational and Cultural films to insert the following notice which will be of interest to all students of cinematography and education. In addition five conferences will be held on Film Production and Technique, Foreign Relations and Documentary Films, The Film in Relation to Science, Medicine and Public Health, The Film in the School, and The Film in Adult Education. Particulars of these may be obtained from the Commission at 39, Bedford Square, London.

Novelty and enterprise will be the keynote of the Exhibition of Mechanical Aids to Learning (Through the Eye and the Ear) which the British Institute of Adult Education has arranged to hold from Sept. 4th to 6th at the London School of Economics, Houghton Street, Aldwych, W.C.2.

The Exhibition has been planned to give both the general public and the education authorities, teachers and students an opportunity of viewing and seeing demonstrated the various mechanical devices which have been produced during the last few years to serve as auxiliaries to learning. Among the firms and organisations which have arranged to exhibit are the following:—

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Programmes of educational films, both silent and sound, will be given

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during the Exhibition. An important feature will be a Model Class demonstrating the use of the Film in teaching children; this Class will be run under the auspices of the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films, and will be conducted for one hour in the morning and afternoon on each day of the Exhibition.

By the kindness of Mr. Will Day, a portion of his well-known Collection illustrating the History and Evolution of the Cinema will be on view at the Exhibition.

The Exhibition will be opened at 3 p.m. on September 4th by Lord Gorell, with Sir Benjamin Gott, Chairman of the Commission on Educational and Cultural Films, in the Chair. Admission on this opening day will be by ticket of invitation only, and limited to representatives of public education authorities, universities, teachers' organisations, and other bodies concerned with education. On Friday, September 5th, and Saturday, September 6th, the Exhibition will be open to the general public between the hours of 11 a.m. and 8 p.m. Admission will be by catalogue, purchaseable at the door (6d.). The catalogue, which will be fully illustrated, will serve both as a guide to the Exhibition and as a permanent descriptive record of the various mechanical devices shown.

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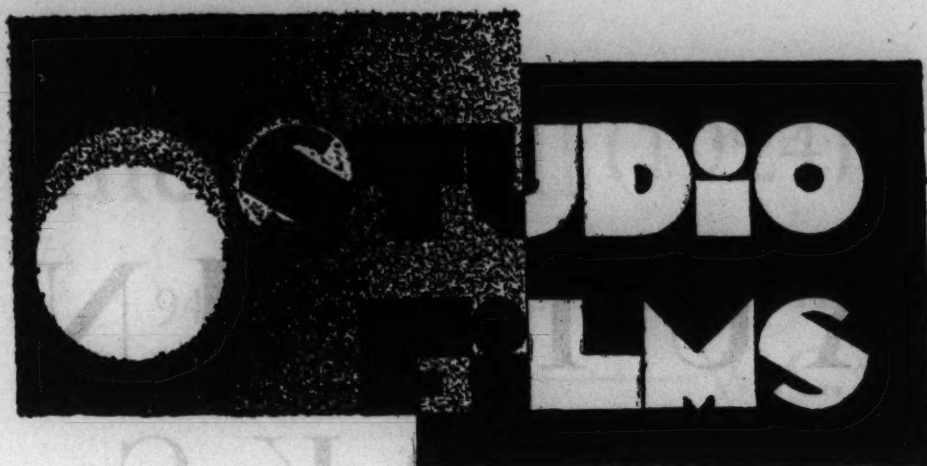
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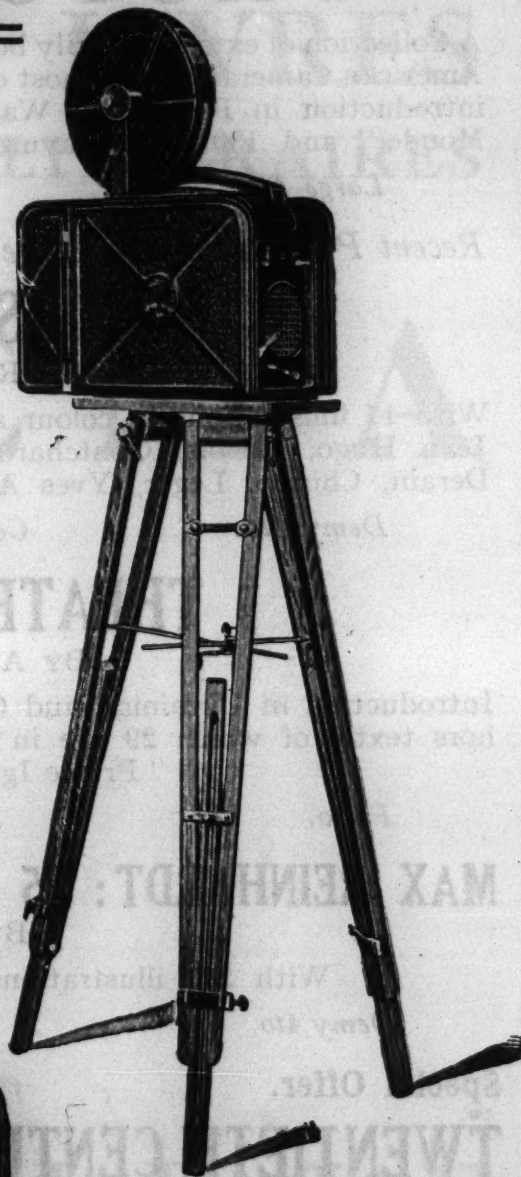
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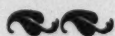
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